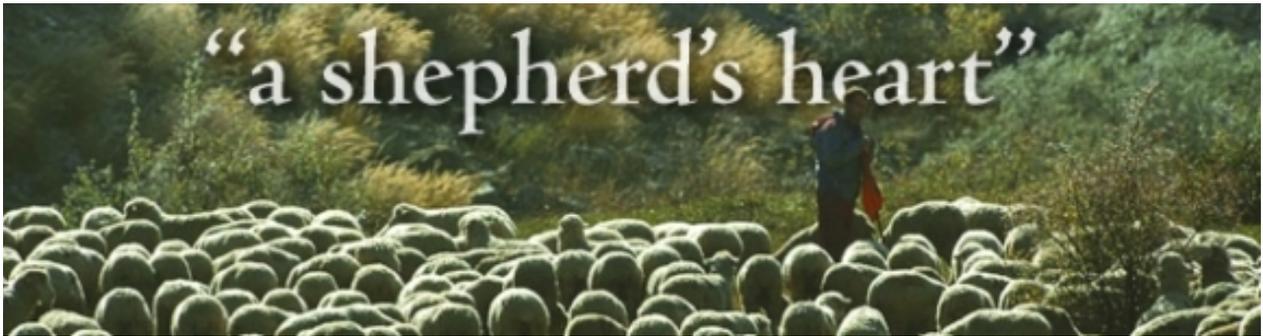




Our Position In Christ Jesus  
&





 **Great Commission Coalition**  
**Good News Always**

## Introduction

Contained within this book are 2 Teachings; First, *“Our Position In Christ Jesus”*, and Second, *“A Shepherd’s Heart”*.

While it is true that any portion of these Teachings would benefit anyone in The Body Of Christ, they are both specifically offered to Pastors & Christian Ministers for their Encouragement & Blessing.

There are few if any groups that face higher demands in their lives than Pastors & Christian Ministers. We cherish and honor each and every one who has heard & heeds God’s Call upon their life to His Ministry. The challenges which are far too numerous to catalogue require levels of wisdom, understanding, & integrity of each of God’s Chosen Servants that others can not understand or relate to.

We know and acknowledge here that the singular way that any of us Called & Chosen can accomplish what The Father would have us do, is In The Power Of The Holy Spirit & by no other means.

So therefore, we seek at all times and in all circumstance, to Lift Jesus Up & give Him alone all of the glory, honor, and majesty that He alone deserves. Our complete reliance is upon Him, His Word, & The Holy Spirit in us.

Our Prayer is that all reading this be Blessed and have the eyes of their understanding opened so they may grow ever closer to The Lord Jesus and thereby become more able to Minister Jesus to those Dear Ones that The Lord sends their way.

Pray before you move any further through this volume, Pray often as you read and consider God’s Word contained here. Stop and meditate often upon what The Holy Spirit is saying to you and acknowledge your dependence upon His Guidance & Power.

May The Lord Himself Bless you and keep you as you seek His Face. May He use you to Glorify His Holy Precious Name as you reach out to Minister Jesus to the lost, the sick, and the dying. Keep Looking To Jesus.



## **The New Birth results in a New Life.**

“Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17). The regenerated person can testify that things are different now. With our New Birth we received a new power and pattern for living. The regenerated man is a “new creation,” the “new” meaning a difference in kind. He now possesses a different kind of life. The words in the text mean more than a mere outward reformation, for it is more than the improvement of the old life. A complete change has come. We have here a new creation as against the old creation. The source of the old creation was Adam, and from him we inherited sin and death. The Fountainhead of the new creation is Jesus, so that a profound and radical change has taken place in the believer. The New Birth brought with it new life, and the new life has brought an entirely new set of desires, appetites, ideals and goals. Now the New Birth does not eradicate the old nature, but it does give new life to control it. And make certain that you are clear on one point, namely, the new creation begins and ends with Jesus Christ.

## **The New Birth results in a New Fellowship.**

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren” (I John 3:14). When one is born again he instinctively is drawn to those persons of like precious faith. All regenerated persons are one in Jesus, and Love is their badge. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35). It is not a fellowship of the rich, the elite, or of one denomination as against another. All born again persons have God as their Father; therefore they are one in Jesus, sharing a mutual Love. No person who hates has Jesus’ new life in him. “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (I John 3:15). It is not possible to love God if we do not love our fellow-man. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (I John 4:20). The fellowship of those born again is the most satisfying and productive among all fellowships. And again the point should be made that this fellowship is a spiritual one, having its roots in Jesus Christ (I John 1:3). “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him” (I John 5:1).

## **The New Birth results in a new standard of Righteousness.**

“. . . Ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him” (I John 2:29). Righteousness is that character or quality of being right or just in the sight of God. Men have varying standards of righteousness, and they are sometimes sincerely zealous, “but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” (Romans 10:2, 3). They refuse to believe that “all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6), and until we are born again, “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:12). But after we are born again, Christ becomes our Righteousness (I Corinthians 1:30). This Righteousness is imputed to the believer by God on the faith principle apart from human works (Romans 4:5, 6). It is God’s gift to every regenerated man (Romans 5:17). Having become partakers of the Divine Nature we now see sin as God sees it. Our standards of what is right and just we now find in God’s Word. The word “again” as used by our Lord in John 3:3, 7, where He spoke of being “born again,” is the translation of another, which means from above. He did not use it with reference to repeated action, but rather in contrast to our physical birth which is from beneath, or earthly. Thus having been born from above, we are to “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1, 2).

In summing up our study of the doctrine of Regeneration, we may conclude that the regenerated person has been given the power to obey God and to grow in grace. The act of regeneration itself is instantaneous. Spiritually speaking, you are either born or unborn. If you have not experienced the new birth, trust Jesus now, and the Holy Spirit will give you new life.

### **Justification**

All the doctrines of the Bible are important, but none is more vital to the peace and rest of the child of God than the Bible Truth of Justification. The believer does not ascend to the peak of Christian joy until he appreciates and appropriates this aspect of The Grace of God. Forgiveness is wonderful; pardon is wonderful; cleansing is wonderful; but Justification is more wonderful. In Paul’s day, and later in the days of the Protestant Reformation, and in our own day, it would be difficult to find a truth more paramount to our historic Christian faith than the doctrine of Justification.

In the preceding lesson we discussed the doctrine of Regeneration. Now there is a difference between Regeneration and Justification. Regeneration is God working in us; Justification is God working for us.

## The Fact of Justification

The question of man's justification before God was raised early in man's history. In the Book of Job we read, "How should man be just with God?" (Job 9:2), and "How then can man be justified with God?" (Job 25:4).

In the New Testament the Apostle Paul, chief exponent of the doctrine of Justification, developed it more fully. After his conversion, and during his visit to Antioch in Pisidia, he said, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38, 39). Paul says that forgiveness and justification are made possible through Jesus Christ, but he makes it clear that the two are not identical. If a criminal is found guilty and convicted of crime, he may be forgiven by the offended party and even pardoned by the governor, but he remains guilty of his offense. His guilt was established and the court records carry it as such. He has been forgiven but not justified.

The Apostle is saying that God does two things for the guilty but believing sinner that no man can possibly do for another; that is, He both *forgives* and *justifies*. *Justification* is more than forgiveness. We can forgive another for his wrong, but never can we justify him. Forgiveness assumes guilt; therefore, the guilty one cannot be justified. On the other hand, if we justify a man, then he needs no forgiveness, because justification assumes no guilt. But since all men are both guilty and condemned sinners before God, all need both forgiveness and justification before entering the Kingdom of God.

Justification can be defined as that act of God whereby He declares Absolutely Righteous any and all who take shelter in the Blood of Jesus Christ as their only Hope for Salvation. Justification is a legal term which changes the believing sinner's standing before God, declaring him acquitted and accepted by God, with the guilt and penalty of his sins put away forever. Justification is the sentence of the Judge in favor of the condemned man, clearing him of all blame and freeing him of every charge. Justification does not make the sinner Righteous, but when God sees him "in Christ," He declares that he is Righteous, thereby pronouncing the verdict of "not guilty." In modern jurisprudence a sentence in any court must be in keeping with the facts presented. A judge has no right to condemn the innocent or to clear the guilty. Only God can clear the guilty.

We must keep in mind the fact that there is a close connection between the act of justifying and the imputed righteousness of the one who has been justified. Though the words *just*, *justify*, *justification*, *right*, *righteous*, and *righteousness* are all translations from the same root, their individual meanings may differ slightly. However, a general meaning is common to all. The meaning of these words is always objective, not subjective. If we looked to men for a definition of the words *justification* and *righteousness*, their meaning might change with time and differ according to geographical location. Men change in their thinking. What might be considered just and right in one

generation, or in one part of the world, might not be so considered in another generation, or in a different part of the world. Dr. Kenneth S. Wuest said, "God is the objective standard which determines the content and meaning, and at the same time keeps that content of meaning constant and unchanging, since He only is the unchanging One." A just person is one who has been declared Righteous by God. God is the Author of Justification. "It is God that justifieth" (Romans 8:33). Man has nothing to do with it except to receive it through faith, and that as The Holy Spirit enables him.

## **The Foundation of Justification**

Forgiveness cannot be effected, nor Righteousness declared, until guilt has been established. If a man is not guilty, no act or declaration of justification is needed. The man who contends that he does not need to be Justified by God must first establish the evidence that there is no accusation against him. But he who believes The Scriptures, and examines his own heart honestly, must admit that he is an accused and guilty sinner before God. We know that there is something wrong with the human race. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

God chose the Apostle Paul to expound the doctrine of Justification. This Paul did in detail in his Epistle to the Romans. Romans 1:18-3:20 depicts a court scene. In 1:18-32 the unrighteousness of the Gentiles is exposed to the light. With great delicacy Paul alluded to some of the vile practices of which they were guilty. Then in clear and bold logic, he listed twenty-five charges against man. In chapter 2:1-16 he shows that the self-righteous are equally guilty before God. The moralists of Paul's day were men of culture, refinement, and intellect, but they too were inexcusable. In the remainder of chapter 2, verses 17-29, the Apostle strips the Jew of every vestige of the cloak of self-righteousness, so that when we reach chapter 3, verse 19, God's startling verdict is "Guilty!" Every mouth is stopped and all the world is accused before Him. A sad picture, but true!

Consider well and take seriously the fact of the universality of sin. You and I are guilty and condemned. No earthly or fleshly means, no court on earth can justify us in God's sight. We lack Righteousness. God has a Righteousness which He desires to make ours. If we accept it, He will pardon, forgive, free, cleanse, and Justify us. Upon this foundation God goes into action. Man's need and his inability to help himself occasion a move on God's part. He must find a way to ransom His fallen creature and to remove both the penalty and guilt of man's sin.

The question arises, How can God Justify the guilty sinner and at the same time remain just? How can He declare an unrighteous man Righteous and Himself remain right? This is the problem simply stated, and it is the basis upon which God acts in Justification. The very nature of God demands that He justify the Righteous and condemn the guilty. If, out of favoritism, or for other reasons, God cleared the guilty and condemned the Righteous, He would not be administering justice. Little wonder that one theologian suggested that

the Holy and Righteous God faced the greatest riddle ever when He set out to Justify the ungodly.

I must confess that, as a parent, I have been guilty of dealing unjustly with my children, not in punishing them for their misconduct, but in finding some excuse for it. More than once I explained away their conduct because I did not want to administer justice as I knew it should be administered. In so doing I failed to deal justly on the basis of the facts in the case. Because they were my children and I loved them, I excused and shielded their guilt. Now I am critical of my sons and daughters when I see them dealing in this same way with their children. I am more ready now to judge my grandchildren justly, but love kept me from so judging my own children.

God, in keeping with His Holiness and Justice, cannot deal unjustly with guilty sinners. He must judge and condemn the guilty. But since all are guilty and deserving of judgment, how can He save those whom He Loves? From the human viewpoint this is an insurmountable problem, one for which there is no solution. But God did find a way whereby He could remain just and at the same time justify the guilty who would do no more than believe. How He did it is the topic of our present study, for it brings before us one of the most majestic and profound truths in all the Bible, the doctrine of Justification.

## **What is the function of Justification?**

### **First, we know that sinners are Justified by God.**

God Himself is the Justifier. Only God can justify a man; no man can justify another man. The tribunal of Heaven differs from all earthly tribunals. The source of Justification must be in The One Holy and Righteous God. The governor of a state, or the President of the United States, can pardon a guilty and condemned criminal, but neither can reinstate the criminal to the position of an innocent man. The Bible illustrates this: "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then shall they justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked" (Deuteronomy 25:1). In all human jurisprudence such a procedure is proper. If a man is not guilty of a charge made against him, he should be justified. But in the case of Biblical Justification, all men are sinners, and since all sin is against God, He only must be satisfied. ". . . whom He (God) called, them He also justified . . ." (Romans 8:30). "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth" (Romans 8:33). ". . . That He (God) might be just, and the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:26). Indeed, only God can Justify sinners.

### **Second, we are Justified by Grace.**

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). Look carefully at the text and notice that word "freely." The Greek word (do?rean) translated "freely" means "without a cause." The same Greek word is so

translated in John 15:25. There was no cause in the words and works of Jesus for which men should hate Him, yet He was hated “freely,” “without a cause.” Just as there was no cause that men should hate our Lord, so there was no cause that God should justify man; but He justifies him “freely,” without a cause. Jesus came with a heart full of Love for mankind, but they hated Him. Man’s heart has been evil continually, but God Loves him. Justification is something for nothing. In the Latin version the word “freely” is “gratis,” “being justified gratis.” God’s method of Justifying men gives us a glorious demonstration of His Sovereign Grace. Grace has dug a foundation so deep that men have been drinking from its cleansing, justifying stream for centuries.

After Charles Spurgeon had finished preaching a sermon on “Justification by Grace,” a man came to him and said, “Oh sir, I have been praying and I do not think God will forgive me unless I do something to deserve it.” To which Mr. Spurgeon replied, “I tell you, sir, if you bring any of your deservings, you shall never have it. God gives away His Justification freely; and if you bring anything to pay for it, He will throw it in your face and will not give His Justification to you.”

You cannot buy it with money, for it is “freely by His Grace.” You cannot work for it with your hands; it is “freely by His Grace.” You cannot receive it through any rite or ceremony; it is “freely by His Grace.” You cannot lay claim to it because you are not so bad as others, for it is “freely by His Grace.” It is useless to wait until you improve, because it is “freely by His Grace.” If you hope to be Justified before God apart from Grace, you have a false idea of the value of the Christian Gospel. Perhaps some of you think that it is all too cheap and not worth bothering about. If such is the case, I urge you to come with me that I may show you what it cost God to provide Justification for you and me.

### **Third, we are Justified by Blood.**

The provision for Righteousness is solely through the Blood of Christ. “Much more then, being now justified by His (Christ’s) blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Romans 5:9). “Being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:24-26) These verses are of tremendous importance because they show the **only ground of Justification.**

We emphasize the phrase “to declare His Righteousness,” for to Justify means to declare Righteous, the basis of which is the shed Blood of Jesus Christ. The Righteousness of God for sinners has been accomplished through the redeeming process of God’s Son. When God declares a man Righteous, that declaration and act finds its efficacy in the Blood of Jesus Christ, Who died on Calvary. The worth of His shed Blood is the Righteous ground on which the Grace of God can act in behalf of sinners.

Did you ever question why Christ died on the Cross? The answer is “to declare His Righteousness.” You see, God could not remain Just and at the same time allow sin to go unpunished. Justification cannot be on arbitrary grounds. There must be a moral basis for a Holy God to Justify a sinful man. God cannot be Just and the Justifier of the ungodly (Romans 3:26) unless a just penalty has been exacted. He is never merciful at the expense of Justice. If God is to Justify a guilty sinner, He can do it only on the ground that the payment for sin has been met. When an earthly judge shows mercy, he is not being just; and when he is just, he cannot show mercy. The only way that God could be both Merciful and Just was through Calvary, where Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sin. There He vindicated His Holy Law and at the same time showed mercy to sinners. The vicarious sufferings and death of Christ are the cause of our Justification before God.

Paul set forth this doctrine clearly in II Corinthians 5:21 when he said, “For he (God) hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Justification is only “in Him,” for apart from Him no basis for it exists.

Let us put it another way--the only Righteous basis for our Justification has been provided through the death of Christ. This was the only way that God could have reckoned to us His Righteousness, and it is the one way He found of not reckoning to us our sin. The Righteousness of Jesus is imputed to the believer; the sin of the unbeliever is imputed to Christ as if that sin were Christ's. Do you think it was a fair exchange? Little wonder that men will Love and serve the Lord Jesus by life and by death! Praise God for The Atonement, for without it He could not reckon us other than what we actually are, nor could He deal with us differently from what we deserve. God can make bad men good only through the death of His Son, for we are Justified by His Blood.

#### **Fourth, we are Justified by Faith.**

“Therefore, being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). “Therefore, we conclude that a man is *justified by faith* without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28). “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that *justifieth* the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (Romans 4:5). Faith is the vital point of contact between the sinner and God. *All may be* Justified, but only those who believe are Justified. Remember, there is no meritorious value in faith itself. The Blood of Christ and the Grace of God compose the basis of Justification and the principle upon which it is offered to man. This is the God-Ward aspect of Justification, but like all the Blessings of Salvation, the sinner cannot receive it until he accepts it, and this he does when he acknowledges his guilt and puts personal faith in what God has done for him in Jesus Christ.

Paul gave Abraham as an excellent biblical illustration of Justification by faith. He says, “. . . Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness” (Romans 4:3, cf. Genesis 15:6; Galatians 3:6). Abraham had nothing, or did nothing, that would

stand boasting before God. He simply believed God, and through his faith in the truth which God had spoken, God in Grace freely Justified him. It was Abraham's faith that was reckoned unto him for Righteousness. Verse 5 tells us that only one kind of man can be Justified; not the self righteous worker, but the ungodly man who believes, for, says Paul: ". . . to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:5). Do not misunderstand Paul. He is not inferring that faith is Righteousness, but rather that faith is the means through which Righteousness is bestowed. Faith is not the end in itself; it is a means to the end.

Abraham's Justification is the pattern of the Justification of all men. The principle on which God declared him Righteous is the principle on which He declares any man Righteous. When God, by a judicial decision, made Abraham a Righteous man, He did it on the principle of faith, "that he (Abraham) might be the father of all them that believe" (Romans 4:11). Abraham was Justified, not by rites of religion, for circumcision was not required until later, nor by the deeds of the law, for the law was not yet given, but through faith in God's Word.

The Bible so solemnly shows us that he who justifies himself by his own works must be condemned by God, but he who condemns himself and trusts in Christ will find complete Justification in Him.

I would not work my soul to save,  
That work my Lord has done;  
But I would work like any slave  
For Love of God's dear Son.

One further thought. In a comprehensive statement of the Gospel, Paul wrote, "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our *justification*" (Romans 4:25). Jesus' resurrection was as necessary for our Justification as was His death. Had He not risen, man would be yet in his sins (I Corinthians 15:17), because Jesus would not be what He claimed to be. He had to rise from death and appear before God in our behalf in order to secure for us the benefits of His death. Had death triumphed over Him, our Justification would have been forever impossible. That He should pass into Heaven to appear for us was as necessary as His death on the cross (Matthew 16:21). On account of our offenses He died, and on account of our Justification He arose, the latter being the ratifying counterpart of the former, the confirmation of the completeness and satisfaction of The Atonement.

### **Fifth, we are Justified by The Holy Spirit.**

"And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:11). I understand this verse to mean that the Holy Spirit is The Agent and Power by which we are declared Righteous. It is the Spirit Who regenerates us (John 3:5; Titus 3:5) and puts

us in Christ. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . .” (I Corinthians 12:13). All three Persons in the Holy Trinity are active in the Justification of sinners. The believing sinner’s Righteousness is the plan of God The Father, the provision of God The Son, and by The Power of God The Holy Spirit.

There is no conflict between Paul and James in their presentation of the Doctrine of Justification. Both were inspired by the Holy Spirit, therefore both are correct.

Paul says, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28).

James says, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (James 2:24).

Paul is explaining how a sinner is Justified (pronounced righteous) by God, namely, by *faith alone*. James is stating how a believer who has been Justified by God is justified before men, namely, by *works*. James is speaking of the evidence of Justification. He makes his point clear by use of illustration: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” (James 2:21). Of course he was! But when did Abraham offer Isaac upon the altar? It was many years after he was Justified before God. God Justified Abraham before Isaac was born (Genesis 15:6). Abraham justified himself before men after he had been declared acquitted by God. What was true of Abraham was likewise true of Rahab (James 2:25). Both have reference to justification before men. When a man says he has been Justified by God, his fellowmen have a right to expect him to prove his faith by his good works.

The Biblical account of the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-29), shows that Paul and James were in perfect agreement. In Romans Paul is merely emphasizing the truth that faith is the means of Justification, while James stresses the fact that good works are the fruit of Justification. Paul says, “Do not depend on your good works to Justify you.” James says, “Do not neglect to perform good works if you are Justified.” Both are right. When a man is Justified by faith, good works are sure to follow.

A solemn word of warning is in order here. When the covetous Pharisees derided our Lord, Who knew their hearts, Jesus answered them, “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15). There is a false exterior justification that has the approval and approbation of men, but is despised of God because the heart is not right. There is always the danger of men trying to live the Christian life when they are not Christian at heart. Remember, it is by God’s Perfect Standard of Justification that we all will be tried. The Pharisees made open and loud professions before men, but their hearts were full of covetousness. So much lower than God’s Standard of Holiness is man’s that things which are approved of men may be counted as evil in the sight of God. Let us make certain that by faith we are Justified before God.

Nor can it be said that Paul contradicted himself when he wrote, “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Romans 2:13). Paul wrote this to those who were boasting that the Law was given to them. They gloried in the Law. They trusted in the Law. But the Law condemned them because they *could not* keep it. Paul was telling them that if they hoped to be Justified by the Law, they had to be more than hearers--they must be *doers*. But where is there a man who ever kept the whole law? There was but One. His name is Jesus Christ, and He was the only Just Man. He needed not to be Justified since He was already Holy and Just. If any person would be saved by keeping the Law, then he must keep it wholly, not merely in part, for “. . . he is a debtor to do the whole law” (Galatians 5:3). “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

If a man’s obedience to some part of the law is his boast, he may glory before man “but not before God” (Romans 4:2).

## **The Fruits of Justification**

Paul’s summary of his argument of this great truth lists the blessings which accompany it. Here is the believer’s heritage in Jesus. These results of Justification by faith are given to us in Romans, chapter 5.

Paul commences in verse 1 with the word “therefore.” This word definitely connects that which is to follow with that which has been said in previous chapters. It gathers up the truth of what precedes and sheds light upon the truth about to be affirmed. We began with man down in the depth of sin, Jew and Gentile alike, both guilty and condemned before God. Then we saw the record of the Pure Love and Grace of God, in sending Jesus Christ to die in the sinner’s place and for sin, showing that the sinner could be Justified before God, “through The Redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” “Therefore,” says Paul, “in view of what God in His Son has done for man, these are the blessings that pour forth from God to all who receive His justifying grace.”

### **A. We Have Peace With God (Romans 5:1)**

This phrase sets forth the greatness of our new standing before Him. This peace is not subjective; it is objective. It is not the tranquility and quietness of our own feelings and emotions. Elsewhere Paul speaks of the “peace of God” (Philippians 4:7), an experience of those believers who learn to cast their cares on Him. “Peace with God” means that the strife between God and the believer has ended, hostilities have ceased, and no longer are we His enemies. Praise God! The war is done, armistice has been declared, and God holds nothing whatever against us. Sin has been fully and finally judged in the Person of Christ, our Substitute and Sin-Bearer. God was satisfied with the sacrifice of His Son, and never again will He take up a case against those who have been Justified by faith. He sees the believer just as if he had never sinned. Declared Righteous through The Redemption which is in Jesus, the believer can now say;

I hear the word of Love, I gaze upon the Blood;

I see the mighty sacrifice, And I have Peace with God.

Its everlasting peace, Sure as Jehovah's Name;

As stable as His Steadfast Throne, For evermore the same.

A judicial Peace between The Holy God and a guilty sinner has been established. Jesus Christ "made peace through The Blood of His Cross . . . And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight" (Colossians 1:20-22).

### **B. We Have Access to God (Romans 5:2)**

Before our sins were put away, we had absolutely no right of approach to God. Sin shuts man out from God's presence. Our first parents were driven out from the garden; Cain was driven out from the presence of the Lord; Israel was kept afar off from the foot of Mount Sinai lest some of the people should approach it. Only the high priest could come before the Divine Presence, and that only once each year, and not without blood. Of Jehovah, the Prophet wrote: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). But Jesus having taken away my sin, I now have access into God's presence. Since only The Righteous can enter, the believer has access because he has been Justified--declared Righteous. He now can be introduced to the private chamber of the King of kings, even into the Holiest of all. Furthermore, it is important that we do not overlook the fact that this access is both a present and a permanent possession. Remember, we could never open the way nor introduce ourselves to God. We were brought there by Jesus Who said, "I am the Door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9).

Beloved, let us not neglect our privilege--"in and out." Shame on believers to have access to so much and possess so little! We have access into His Grace. It is our own fault if we are empty. But let us never lose sight of the glorious fact that our Lord Jesus Christ, through His Death, is the sole ground of our Justification. We have access only through Him. Even in our daily prayer life, He warned us that we can be successful only as we pray, as He said, "In My Name." It is "through Him we have access" (Ephesians 2:18). "In Christ Jesus our Lord . . . we have boldness and access" (Ephesians 3:11, 12). "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19). This truth is emphasized for us in I Peter 3:18, where we read: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." The last phrase of this verse, "that He might bring us to God," can be translated, "that He

might provide for us access into the presence of God.” This blessed privilege is all based purely upon God’s Grace.

### **C. We Rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God (Romans 5:2)**

When a man is justified by faith, he rejoices in the present because of the future glory. The writer knows from experience that when the truth of justification burst upon his soul, his joy and rejoicing increased. Knowing that we shall enter into and share Christ’s glory should make us rejoice now. There is glory for the believer which has not yet been manifested. It is future--“When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory” (Colossians 3:4 R.V.). It is His own glory which He has given to us (John 17:22), and it is the result of our being declared righteous through faith in His Blood. It is “the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18), for “whom he justified, them he also glorified” (Romans 8:30). This means that justification by faith guarantees for us our future. It works! It will last!

### **D. We Glory in Tribulation Also (Romans 5:3)**

There is no promise in God’s Word that those who are justified by faith shall escape tribulation. But our present hope and future glory are not jeopardized by tribulation. Tribulation cannot touch the security of the justified. The mere professor is easily moved by tribulation (Matthew 13:21), but in the justified, tribulation works a positive good. Those who are justified by faith can take pleasure in tribulation (II Corinthians 12:10), for we know that it is “but for a moment,” and that it “worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (II Corinthians 4:17).

Someone may ask, “How can you take such an attitude toward your troubles?” Charles Hodge has said, “Since our relation to God is changed, the relation of all things to us is changed.” And that is the answer! Judicially we are declared righteous, we are justified, and the just shall live by faith. None but the justified who walk by faith can rejoice in the midst of tribulation, for rejoicing in tribulation is not natural to the unregenerate heart.

If this message should find its way into the hands of an unsaved person, I would say in closing that God can do nothing more to save you. Heaven was bankrupt to make you righteous. He did all that He could do. Reject Jesus The Savior no longer, but, like Abraham did, believe God, and it shall be counted unto you for righteousness.

### **Sanctification**

The doctrine of Sanctification is doubtless one of the most misunderstood doctrines of our historic Christian faith. Many Christians either withdraw from it completely or else they associate it with fanatical fringe groups. The result has been its continued neglect or mistreatment.

Now I am aware of the fact that this attempt to explain Sanctification places me on controversial ground. If there is going to be any disagreement among us, please let us disagree agreeably. We are in a war, but not against each other, it is against sin. The very fact that we are saved people should tell us that the doctrine of Sanctification does not belong in the boxing ring.

If there is a basic error, I believe it is the failure to grasp the meaning of the term *Sanctification*. On one occasion in class at a Bible College the assignment was to write a definition of Sanctification. Many of the students stressed the idea of purification from moral evil. Several were more explicit in making Sanctification a state of holiness in which it was not possible for a saved person to sin. Now the students did not learn this from the Bible. The Scriptures do not teach that Sanctification is the improvement of the unregenerate nature, nor that it is the eradication of that nature thereby rendering it impossible for a child of God to commit sin. I am not suggesting that there is no experiential aspect in Sanctification in which practical holiness will manifest itself in the Christian's life. Most assuredly does the work of Sanctification in the believer involve victory over sin in his daily life. Sanctification is a single act, but it is also involves a continuous process.

The basic meaning of the verb sanctify (Gr. *hagiazō*?) is to separate, or to set apart. Possible the latter term comes closest to the Greek word. Sanctification, then, is that sovereign act of God whereby He sets apart a person, a place, or an object for Himself in order that He might accomplish His purpose in the world by means of that person, place, or object.

Having stated the meaning and a definition of the term, let us look at some Scriptures where the word is used:

(1) A day can be sanctified. "And God blessed the seventh day, and *sanctified* it . . ." (Genesis 2:3).

(2) A building and its contents can be sanctified. God said, "And I will *sanctify* the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar . . ." (Exodus 39:44). "And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them" (Numbers 7:1).

(3) The house in which a man lives can be sanctified. "And when a man shall *sanctify* his house to be holy unto the LORD, then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad: as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand" (Leviticus 27:14).

(4) A mountain can be sanctified. "And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for Thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the Mount, and *sanctify* it" (Exodus 19:23).

In all of the above passages the meaning of the word *Sanctify* is to set apart for holy purposes. However, a day, a tabernacle, a house, or a mountain cannot sin. These items are neither moral nor immoral; they are amoral. It seems quite clear, then, that Sanctification in these instances does not mean a state of holiness in which it is not possible for sin to enter.

An interesting passage in the book of Isaiah shows that men can sanctify themselves (set themselves apart) to do evil. “They that sanctify and purify themselves, in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 66:17).

We know that our Lord Jesus Christ was sinless and therefore free from all moral impurity, and yet He prayed, “And for their sakes, I sanctify myself . . .” (John 17:19). In this statement He was simply testifying that He had set apart Himself to fulfill the holy purpose for which He came into the world.

Sanctification is used with reference to God. “And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes” (Ezekiel 36:23). God is here telling of a day, still future, when He will set Himself apart as the one true and living God, and that all peoples in the earth will acknowledge Him as such.

And now, on the background of these preliminary thoughts, let us pursue our study in the doctrine of Sanctification in its relation to the believer in Jesus Christ.

### **God’s Preparation for our Sanctification**

By Preparation I mean that initial Sovereign Work of God preliminary to any experience in the life of the person who is to be Sanctified. The Apostle Peter wrote, “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1 Peter 1:2). Here we see all three Persons in the Godhead active in Sanctification.

Before an unsaved person becomes a child of God, he is “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” Election and Foreknowledge are of necessity the preparatory work of God prior to anyone actually experiencing Sanctification. Peter does not here explain the doctrines of Election and Foreknowledge; he merely states the fact that God the Father made a choice before ever God the Son and God the Holy Spirit acted in behalf of our Sanctification. Divine foreknowledge is not limited to mere foresight of what men will do at some future time. It is God’s foresight and choice linked together with His own plan and purpose.

God said to Jeremiah, “Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). This is a clear illustration of the Preparation for Sanctification of God the Father in Election and Foreknowledge. In the Divine plan God set apart Jeremiah for His work before ever Jeremiah was born, separating and appointing him to be a prophet to the nations. Jeremiah resisted the appointment on the ground of his immaturity and insufficiency, but God assured him that He knew what He was doing. Surely He would not set apart a man for a Ministry without providing the enablement to carry out all of the responsibilities attached thereto. “Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee.” That is God’s Preparation for our Sanctification.

The Apostle wrote similarly, “But when it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood” (Galatians 1:15, 16). Paul was set apart for the ministry long before the cradle. His conversion, commission and career as an apostle were foreseen and foreordained before he was born. It was all according to God’s eternal purpose and grace. It was dignifying to Paul’s office as an apostle to know that it all did not “just happen,” but that he was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:14). The Galatians must know that he was no self-styled, self-appointed apostle, but rather divinely set apart. The statement that God separated Paul from his mother’s womb is more than a reference to God’s Providential care of him at birth. It refers to God’s Preparation for Paul’s Sanctification. Even though, as Saul of Tarsus, he waged a fierce warfare against the church, the Lord ruled and overruled, bringing him to the place where Paul himself knew that God had a plan for his life.

God set apart Jacob before he was born, in preference to his twin brother, Esau (Genesis 25:23, cf. Romans 9:10-13); Samson before he was conceived (Judges 13:3-5); and John the Baptist prior to his conception (Luke 1:13-17). And I am convinced that my own conversion and call to the Ministry were of God’s choosing and not mine. It was no mere coincidence that I was present in Spring Texas the day I was saved. It was not a common, mere incident when I became a student of God’s Word, The Person of Jesus, and the Ministry of The Holy Spirit. I can testify with Paul that God put me into the Ministry and has enabled me to continue (I Timothy 1:12). This is Preparation for Sanctification, that work of God the Father in which He Sovereignly selects people and sets them apart before they are born into this world.

Before leaving this point of God’s Preparation for Sanctification, let us have a look at some verses which refer to our Lord and His earthly Ministry. When Jesus spoke on one occasion to the Jews, He referred to Himself as the One “Whom the Father *sanctified*, and sent into the world” (John 10:36). We know that this statement from His lips had nothing to do with moral behavior because “in Him is no sin” (I John 3:5). What He said is that the Father set Him apart and sent Him from Heaven to earth to accomplish the Divine mission of redemption. Therefore, he could say, “And for their sakes I sanctify

myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:19). He had set Himself apart for the purpose for which the Father had set Him apart. In the Father’s plan for the Son we see the principle of God’s Preparation for our Sanctification.

## **Our Position in Sanctification**

From this point in our study we will consider Sanctification, not in relation to places or objects, but only to people. By Our Position in Sanctification I mean that act of God The Holy Spirit in which He sets apart every saved person. It is the first step in the experience of the believer. The preparatory work has been going on for some time according to God’s Divine Plan, but now that work becomes effective in the life of the individual person. He is now actually set apart as God’s Possession and for God’s Purpose. “This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise” (Isaiah 43:21). Our Position in Sanctification is the fact and act of belonging to God.

It is important to keep in mind the fact that all three Persons in the Godhead are active in the believer’s Sanctification. Man was created in the likeness and image of God, and he was God’s Possession by creative right. But Adam’s sin broke the relationship between God and himself. In God’s Preparation for our Sanctification God included the means whereby fallen man could be restored to a right relationship with Himself. And what was that Divinely provided means? The Blood of Jesus Christ! God could not set apart an unclean sinner for His Possession and His Purpose, therefore, He purchased and purified the sinner by the Blood of His Son. “Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate” (Hebrews 13:12). “By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). The once-for-all sacrifice of God’s Son purchased the once-for-all Sanctification for the sinner. “For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14). Apart from the Atoning Blood of Christ, man could not be set apart unto God. But the moment we receive God’s Son we are said to be “in Him,” a phrase used more than seventy times in Paul’s Epistles denoting the believer’s unaltered and unalterable position. Thus we are Sanctified by the Blood of Christ.

Who then are the Sanctified? All who have received Jesus Christ have been “sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ” (Jude 1). This is every Christian’s position, independent of the length of time one has been saved, how much or how little one knows about the Bible, or how spiritual that person might be. So if you have trusted Christ to save you, then you have been set apart once for all; you are God’s Sanctified One. Now I am not suggesting that the only Sanctification a Christian can experience and enjoy is that which is positional, or credited to him at the time he is born again. But I am insisting that our Position in Sanctification was purchased by Jesus Christ’s Atoning Blood and posted to the all believers at conversion.

Let us look now at the work of The Holy Spirit in Our Position in Sanctification. The First Corinthian Epistle contains some pregnant passages on this theme. “And such were

some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Corinthians 6:11). Notice the order; they are said to have been Sanctified before they were Justified. Earlier in this Epistle Sanctification precedes it, and the Holy Spirit prepares the heart of the individual, making him ready to receive it.

For years before my acceptance of Jesus Christ I passed through a real struggle, restless and troubled because of a sense of guilt, shame, and hopelessness. With each passing day the burden of my sin became increasingly heavy. Then the day arrived when my heart eagerly responded to God’s Word and I was born again, Justified. As I look back upon that experience, I know now that, during those years of struggling before I was saved, The Holy Spirit was doing His Work of preparing me for The Great Transaction. The moment of the Spirit’s regenerating work in me climaxed His work of positioning me in Sanctification. Now after many years of Christian experience, that work resulting in my being set apart has remained unchanged. Like the Corinthian believers, and all true believers, I was at that moment Justified by God.

Beware of the false teaching that urges the believer to seek Sanctification after they has been saved. Sanctification is not a second Work of Grace to be sought subsequent to the experience of Regeneration. Sanctification takes place at the time of Regeneration. If you have not been Sanctified, then you are not saved. The behavior of some of the Christians at Corinth was anything but commendable. Paul wrote, “For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (I Corinthians 3:3). But then he added, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (I Corinthians 12:13). Notice it does not say that some of them were baptized into the Body, but that all were. This baptizing work of The Holy Spirit is synonymous with Sanctification. The Body here is the Church (see Ephesians 1:22, 23). There is no other way of one getting into Christ’s Church apart from the baptizing work of The Holy Spirit. At the time of Regeneration He sets the believer apart, Sanctifying him. Some of us do not behave at all times as a believer should, but our behavior does not alter our position in The Body.

Another significant passage appears in the opening of the First Corinthian Letter. The Letter is addressed “unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints . . .” (1:2). Two words in this verse stem from a common root; they are the verb “sanctified” (Greek *hagiaso*) and the noun “saints” (Greek *hagios*). The verb sanctified means set apart, and the corresponding noun “saints” are those persons who have been set apart, the set-apart ones. Paul is here addressing all believers in the Corinthian Assembly, not only those who were spiritual but the carnal ones also. Both the carnal and the spiritual are included in the Sanctified Saints. When they were saved they were set apart through the operation of The Holy Spirit. That operation effected an eternal union between The Sanctifier and the

Sanctified, “For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one . . .” (Hebrews 2:11).

The setting apart of the believing sinner as God’s Possession and for God’s purpose is associated with The Holy Spirit’s entering the body at Regeneration. The unsaved man is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1), “alienated from the life of God” (Ephesians 4:18). Jesus said, “I am come that they might have life” (John 10:10). But how does one receive this life? The answer is; when he receives The Holy Spirit. When we were saved we became “partakers of The Divine Nature” (II Peter 1:4). God The Holy Spirit entered the body to take up His permanent abode. Jesus said, “And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (John 14:16, 17). The Day of Pentecost marked the beginning of the fulfillment of our Lord’s Promise, so that now every born-again person is indwelt by The Holy Spirit. Through His incoming He sets apart that believing one.

Child of God, the Holy Spirit is *in you*. He has set you apart for a definite purpose, and that purpose is God’s Perfect Will for your life. And be very certain that He has a plan for you. The fact that He is in you is the plain teaching of Scripture. The Christian assembly at Corinth was an assembly of saints, saved persons, set-apart persons, but not all of the saints were saintly in their behavior. There were disputes and divisions among the brethren. Covetousness and carnality had crept in among them. And yet they were instructed that each believer in the assembly was indwelt by The Holy Spirit. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (I Corinthians 6:19). The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church corporately as well as in each member individually and personally.

This is Sanctification, and it is the Position of every regenerated person. “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9). “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6). “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, where we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). “He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, Who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit” (I Thessalonians 4:8). “That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (II Timothy 1:14).

The above mentioned verses from God’s Word show clearly that Sanctification is the state predetermined by God for every believer, into which He calls them by His grace, and in which they commence their Christian life and experience. My Beloved brothers and sisters, think of it! God has separated us unto Himself. “But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the

truth” (II Thessalonians 2:13). “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord” (I Corinthians 1:30, 31). Are you rejoicing in His Sanctification that He gave to you?

Somewhere I heard or read of a tragedy at sea in which a young fisherman was washed overboard and lost. All efforts to recover his body were futile. He left his young widow and eight-year-old son penniless. Their Godly Pastor who conducted the funeral service was deeply moved by the tragedy. After he returned from the memorial service he went to the local bank and opened a savings account in the name of the orphaned boy. From time to time he added to the account, which continued to bear interest. Ten years later, the boy graduated from high school and at the commencement exercises he was awarded a scholarship in a university hundreds of miles from home. One day the Pastor visited the home to congratulate the boy and his mother. The mother expressed to the Pastor her appreciation for the scholarship, but added the lack of necessary funds for travel, clothing, etc. would prevent them from accepting it. Whereupon the pastor advised her to go to the bank and withdraw the necessary money from the boy’s savings account. The mother said nothing but felt keenly disappointed with the pastor’s remarks. Several weeks later, the Pastor visited and brought up the subject again. Once more the mother expressed her regrets that her son was unable to accept the scholarship. Again the Pastor told her to go to the bank and withdraw the necessary amount from the boy’s account. Within herself she thought; “If this is supposed to be a joke, it is in very poor taste”. But not many days before the deadline, she went to the bank, and after inquiring she learned that the money was there, deposited in her son’s name by another person. Her boy had not earned the money. It was credited, and posted to his account.

Even so, when we were regenerated by The Holy Spirit, there was posted to us The Holiness of Jesus Christ, God’s Gift of Sanctification. The Holy Spirit is God’s Gift, not given discriminately to some believers, but rather to all believers, as the following passages teach: John 7:37-39; Romans 5:5; I Corinthians 2:12; II Corinthians 5:5. No distinctions are as much as hinted at in these verses, nor would we expect any because of the very nature of a gift. A gift is not a reward nor a debt nor a payment for service. This Gift of The Holy Spirit is given to every believer; therefore, every believer has been Positioned and Sanctified permanently.

Some Christians believe sincerely that when a child of God sins, his Position in Sanctification is lost by The Holy Spirit withdrawing Himself from that one. This viewpoint is not Scriptural. Those who hold this view are in error. Our Lord said that the Holy Spirit would “abide with you forever” (John 14:16). If sin in a believer could cause The Holy Spirit to depart from that believer, then that same sin could cause the person who committed it to lose his Salvation, and if one could lose his Salvation, he never could be saved again. (See Hebrews 6:4-6). The believer’s Position in Sanctification is a Permanent Sanctification because of the permanent indwelling of The Holy Spirit. There was no discrimination among the mixed multitude of believers in Corinth. The carnal

Christians were in conflict with each other, but without exception they were all addressed as those who were indwelt by The Holy Spirit.

In at least two Epistles, according to the King James Version, Christians are addressed as those who are “called to be saints” (Romans 1:7; I Corinthians 1:2). This is incorrect and therefore misleading. The italicized words “to be” should have been left out. Christians are now Saints, already set apart, Sanctified. These verses do not anticipate a time in the future when God’s Children will become Saints. Every saved person is as much a Saint now as he ever will be in time or eternity.

## **The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification**

Now to the matter of the Christian’s responsibility in Sanctification; A Godly lifestyle, and true Holiness are to be seen in the life of every saved person. As I study my own daily experiences as a child of God, and observe those with whom I associate in the Lord’s Work, I have a deep conviction that this has been a neglected phase of Christian doctrine. Many who stress continually the great doctrine of Justification fail to see that The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification is equally important. Satan knows well the power of True Sanctification in the believer’s life; therefore, it is to the advancement of his kingdom if he can perpetuate confusion in our minds and conflict among brothers and sisters.

In our consideration of God’s Preparation for our Sanctification the Sovereignty of God was stressed, and rightly so. God is Sovereign in all matters. However, we who are His children are wrong when we use His Sovereignty as an excuse for our sinful unwillingness to carry out our responsibility. When William Carey was pleading for Missionaries to carry the Gospel to un-evangelized peoples of the world, a group of preachers in England tried to silence him with the words, “If God wants to Evangelize the heathen He will do it without your help or ours.” It was true, and still is, that God can reach the heathen with the Gospel without the help of any of us. However, it is equally true that God in His Sovereignty has Ordained that men should be the means of carrying His Gospel to the un-evangelized. The Sovereignty of God in Sanctifying Jeremiah and Paul to preach His Word, and that before they were born, did not relieve them of their responsibility to obey God’s call when it came to them. God’s Preparation and Our Position in Sanctification are entirely the work of the God The Father, Jesus The Son, and The Holy Spirit, but in the matter of The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification there is that element of human responsibility. God does His work perfectly, but in the area of personal Holiness we fail.

Our standard of living, viewed from the financial and material side, has risen to an all time high, but our standard of living, viewed from the spiritual side, has dropped to an all time low. Christians have time for sports, entertainment, travel, and socializing, but little or no time for Communion with God in Prayer and the study of His Word. The marvels of

Saving Grace call for a life corresponding to our exalted position in Jesus. The grace of God which brings Salvation also teaches Sanctification (Titus 2:11, 12).

When anyone makes a study of Practical (experiential) Sanctification, there are some pitfalls to be avoided. One serious danger is that of interpreting The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification by someone's personal experience. We must beware of any disproportionate emphasis on experience which neglects or omits Biblical Doctrine. Many of the religious books coming from the presses today are long on experience but short on Biblical Doctrine. We must see all of life's experiences in the light of what the Bible teaches. Many persons have been led astray because they substituted some personal experience for the teaching of The Word of God. Even if Sanctification were limited to the field of human experience, there would never be an experience that could be proven to be its perfect example, nor would any human statement of that experience exactly describe the full measure of the divine reality. It is the function of the Bible to interpret experience, rather than the function of experience to interpret the Bible. Every experience which originates from God will be found to be according to The Scriptures.

The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification differs from Our Position in Sanctification in that Our Position in Sanctification is solely The Will and Work of God, while The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification involves human responsibility to submit to The Work and The Power of The Holy Spirit in us. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness (i.e., the Sanctification), without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). This Scripture stresses the pursuit of this Practical Sanctification of which I speak. Since we are exhorted to pursue it, then it must be The Will of God for His Children to do so. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" (I Thessalonians 4:3). This aspect of the believer's Sanctification is then a matter of choice on our part. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Timothy 2:21, 22).

Following are other Scriptures which exhort the Christian to sanctify themselves: "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:15, 16). "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5). "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness" (II Peter 3:11). "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1). "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1). These Scriptures do not promise an eradication of the sin nature nor a state of perfection of this life, but they do exhort the believer to self-dedication and surrender to God.

The purpose of this sanctification on the part of all believers is to prevent sin in the life of the Christian. This is important because every child of God, as long as he is in this body, is able to sin. When Adam sinned he lost the Divine Image and Likeness with which he was created. However, in the redemptive plan God restores that Image and Likeness. "According as He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Ephesians 1:4).

At this point in our study we must make the necessary distinction between The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification and that to which some Christians refer to as "sinless perfection," which is an erroneous concept which teaches that a believer in Christ can reach a point in life where he will not commit sin again. The Bible warns against this false view where it says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). This plain statement of fact should be followed up with the solemn warning, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12). It is dangerous for any Christian to associate Sanctification with "sinless perfection" in this life.

In the case of some Christians, the failure to distinguish between Sanctification as taught in the Bible and the deception known as "sinless perfection" results from a misunderstanding of the New Testament words "perfect," "perfected" and "perfection." When the Bible uses these terms in connection with us mortals, it refers to spiritual or ethical maturity whether in a person or the finishing of a work. Moreover, the word does not always mean the accomplished end as the net result of a process, but sometimes it is the process leading to the goal of consummation. It is the process that we must ever pursue. "Follow . . . Holiness" (Hebrews 12:14), that is, pursue it, press on after it. The Apostle Paul said, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after . . . I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12, 14). Spiritual maturity should be the goal of every saved person. We should seek it eagerly, endeavor earnestly to acquire it with urgency, pursue it as a hunter stalks his game or as an athlete the winning of the race.

Sometimes the word "perfect" is used in the comparative degree. A person or an object may be said to be more perfect or less perfect than another person or object. An example of the comparative degree is seen in Hebrews 9:11 where we read, "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building." It could be said that a wife is more perfect than her husband, or that the husband is less perfect than his wife, yet neither of them would have at any time attained to "sinless perfection."

The Greek word translated "perfect" is *teleios*. Its varied usages in the New Testament shows shades of meaning far removed from the idea of "sinless perfection." For example, the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (Gr. *teleios*) (I Corinthians 14:20). Here the Apostle is drawing a contrast between children and adults, exhorting

them, not to “sinless perfection,” but to show forth the kind of understanding that would be expected of mature adults. The same word *teleios* is translated “of full age” in Hebrews 5:14 where it likewise means spiritual maturity. The Christian is to be “perfect” in the sense that he should be spiritually mature in his behavior toward God and toward his fellow-men.

How does anyone pursue Sanctification? How does anyone mature in the Christian life? Certainly it is not through struggling, nor self-confidence, nor by trying to duplicate those “experiences” to which others testify. For one thing, growth takes time. There is no shortcut to spiritual maturity. It takes twenty-one years before a new born babe reaches the twenty-first anniversary of his birth. No amount of struggling or self confidence or mimicking others will speed up the process. A healthy growth that leads to spiritual maturity necessitates time. Now it is true that some new “converts” appear to take off at an extremely fast pace. But this outward appearance might not be the accurate indicator of the inner man. Moreover, if there is going to be a healthy growth, the pace will be modified. Young believers must not feel that they are not making progress because they are not surging ahead at a fast rate of speed. This wrong attitude can lead to discouragement and even disaster.

We will not mature spiritually if we labor under the false idea that the Christian is free from temptation. No child of God is free from temptation, “because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8). His enticements to do wrong will come to us through every doorway of sense, nose, eye, ear, mouth and touch. But it is no sin to be tempted. A young man may seek to entice a young lady to engage in sinful sex outside of marriage, and the girl might be tempted to do so; however, no one can accuse her of wrong-doing if she has kept the door shut against her tempter. Every Christian is tempted, but temptation does not necessarily lead to sin. We can be tempted by Satan (I Corinthians 7:5; I Thessalonians 3:5), by the natural desires of the old unregenerate nature (Galatians 4:14; James 1:14), by other persons (Matthew 16:1; 19:3). But God has made provision for His own so that they need not yield to the temptation. “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (I Corinthians 10:13). Every temptation can result in Blessing if when we are tempted we are driven to God’s Word and Prayer and win the victory.

**First, consider the importance of the Word of God in the Christian’s Practical Sanctification.**

This aspect of Sanctification was in view in our Lord’s Prayer, where He prayed, “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth” (John 17:17). To the Child of God who reads and studies the Bible, it becomes a Cleansing, Sanctifying Power in life. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word” (Psalm 119:9). When we meditate in God’s Word, The Truth of God has its own inherent

power to prevent sin. It becomes a stronghold in temptation. The Psalmist wrote, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11). Our Lord said to His disciples, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” (John 15:3). Of the righteous man it is written, “The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide” (Psalm 37:31). Paul had this same idea in view when he said, “. . . Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:25, 26). Peter likewise stresses the same truth where he writes, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (I Peter 2:2).

If the problem in the Christian life is to bring our Practice up to our Position, then let us become men and women of The Word. The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification and Holiness will manifest itself in our lives more and more as we set ourselves apart to search The Scriptures. God’s Word is Alive, and the active agent The Holy Spirit uses to this end. I cannot know the will of God for my life if I neglect The Word of God. The miracle of being transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ does not take place in an instant; it is a day-by-day process accomplished in us by The Holy Spirit through the Sanctifying Power of The Word of God. “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

**Second, know and declare the fact that  
you are dead to sin and self.**

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him. . .” (ie Christ) (Romans 6:6). Beware of the false theory which wrongly uses this verse to teach that a Christian by an act of his own will can die to self. It is not possible for a Christian to die to self. As a matter of fact, I have never met an advocate of the “death to self” movement who could tell me how I might die to self. The difficulty arises from a failure to examine the Greek text in which there is nothing to support the theory of self-crucifixion or dying to self. The verb in Romans 6:6 is in the past tense, so that the correct translation reads, “Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Christ.” The reference is not to something the Christian must try to accomplish, but rather it refers to The Perfect and Completed Work of Jesus. The exhortation is not to try to die to self by some effort of our own, but to realize that when Christ died on The Cross that we did die to self with Him. This is our position in truth, and it is important that we continually see ourselves and declare ourselves dead to self. The death of Christ not only atones for the penalty of sin, but it has power to deliver us from the practice of sin. This is a mighty truth that we must “know” and on which we need to “declare” continuously.

### **Third, Christians are exhorted to yield their bodies to God.**

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). The surrender of our bodies to God is absolutely essential to The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification. The body is not the entire man, but it is the vehicle of the human spirit and The Temple of The Holy Spirit. Our bodies belong to God by a two-fold right, His Right by creation and by Redemption. “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Corinthians 6:19, 20). Sin manifests itself through the members of the body. “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Romans 6:13). This includes even that “little member” (James 3:5) which too often hurts the membership. It is by means of our bodies that God gets His Work done. He chose to save us through a body, thus the necessity of the Incarnation. Jesus said, “A body Thou hast prepared Me” (Hebrews 10:5). The Holy Man of God will honor God with his body. The Apostle Paul testified, “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (I Corinthians 9:27).

Total self-dedication to God is the result of The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification to God. Make up your mind that unless you yield yourself to God you will not experience a life of Holiness. Victory over any sin is the result of The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification.

### **Fourth, The Practical Nature of Our Sanctification involves the surrender of the will.**

The Christian is indwelt by The Holy Spirit and must therefore be led by The Spirit. The Will of God is all-important in the life of the child of God. And how does God guide us? He guides us through His Word. Basically, God’s Will is found in God’s Word. “Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). But closely related to guidance by The Scriptures is the work of The Holy Spirit in us. He gives guidance to those who sincerely want His Will and who are already walking in obedience to the light which they received from The Word. Any person who is truly saved and who sincerely wants God’s Will shall have it. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). The Will of God is the present sphere of Christian obligation. “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17). Each believer plays an important role in his own Practical Sanctification as he finds and follows and finishes God’s Will for his life. The Christian who is out of God’s Will is miserable most of all.

## **Fifth, we Sanctify ourselves when we walk in The Spirit.**

“This I say then, Walk in (by) the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). The verb walk (Greek *peripateite*) is in the present tense and means to keep on walking by The Spirit. Christians in this dispensation are Blessed with the permanent indwelling of The Holy Spirit who is The Divine enablement for our living a Holy life. What is impossible for the Christian who is resisting or grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit is possible for the one who is walking by The Spirit. When we sin against The Spirit we break fellowship with Him, thereby cutting ourselves off from the supply of His Power. “Quench not the Spirit” (I Thessalonians 5:15), and “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God” (Ephesians 4:30), and your life will be blessed.

### **The Perfect Picture of Our Sanctification**

The Perfect (or ultimate) Picture of Our Sanctification is that aspect of Sanctification related to the Final Perfection of the Children of God. It will not be realized while we are in this mortal body. This Perfect Picture of Our Sanctification is the final element of Our Sanctification, and like God’s Preparation For Our Sanctification and Our Position In Sanctification, it is wholly The Work of God.

Paul wrote about this in closing his First Epistle to the Thessalonians. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thessalonians 5:23). When Christ returns The Believer’s Sanctification will be Complete. The word wholly (Greek *olotelhs*) is found only here in the New Testament and is made up of two words, “complete” and “end.” The ideas of wholeness and completion are in view, meaning Entire Sanctification, through and through, the whole of you, every part of you. It means to be complete and sound in every part. Now this process of Sanctification goes on during the present life here on earth, but it will be perfected at (Greek *en*), not “until,” the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This passage is not an attempt to analyze the constituent parts of man; therefore it is not a proof text in support of trichotomy (the three-fold nature of man). What is in view here is the Perfect Sanctification of the whole man, the time of its accomplishment, at “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and the fact that God Himself will bring it to pass, for “Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it” (verse 24).

The Epistle of Jude commences and concludes with a similar emphasis. It was written “to them that are sanctified by God the Father and preserved in Jesus Christ” (verse 1), and all such are assured that God “is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (verse 24). This is Perfect Sanctification.

Our Perfect Sanctification is The Heart of God for every Believer. “Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good

pleasure of His will” (Ephesians 1:5). The Adoption (Greek *huiothesia*) is not a word of relationship, not the making of a son, but son-placing. Some students make the mistake of confusing Adoption with Regeneration. In Regeneration the believing sinner is made a son of God. In Adoption the regenerated son of God is placed in the position of Perfect Son-Ship. The Adoption is not experienced in this life while we remain in this mortal body. All the redeemed are assured of their Adoption (Galatians 4:4, 5) by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit Who is called “The Spirit of adoption” (Romans 8:15); however, we do not actually experience it until Christ returns for us and our bodies are redeemed. Paul wrote, “. . . Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body” (Romans 8:23).

Perfect Son-Ship is that for which we are waiting. If we had it now we would not be waiting for it. There is never any danger of Christians not becoming perfectly Sanctified. The Apostle Paul said that through the indwelling Holy Spirit “ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30). Because God did “predestinate (us) to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Romans 8:28), the glorious goal of our Adoption is assured.

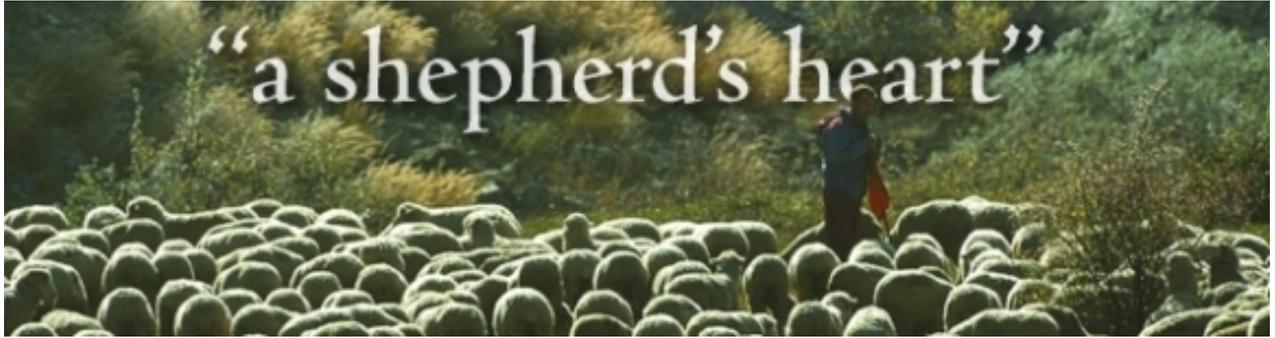
Before time began God planned to bestow upon The Redeemed a glory, unique and appropriate only to The Church in Christ. In ages to come The Church will display that glory because The God of All Grace “hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus” (I Peter 5:10). Indeed this is a special kind of glory, even the Perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ. “Whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Thessalonians 2:14). In other words, when God called us it was with the view that we should obtain the glorified state. Verse 13 says that The Holy Spirit is the agent in “Sanctification” to that glorious end. The glory of the revelation of The Lord from heaven will be shared by Christ’s Church at that day (Colossians 3:4).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (I John 3:2).

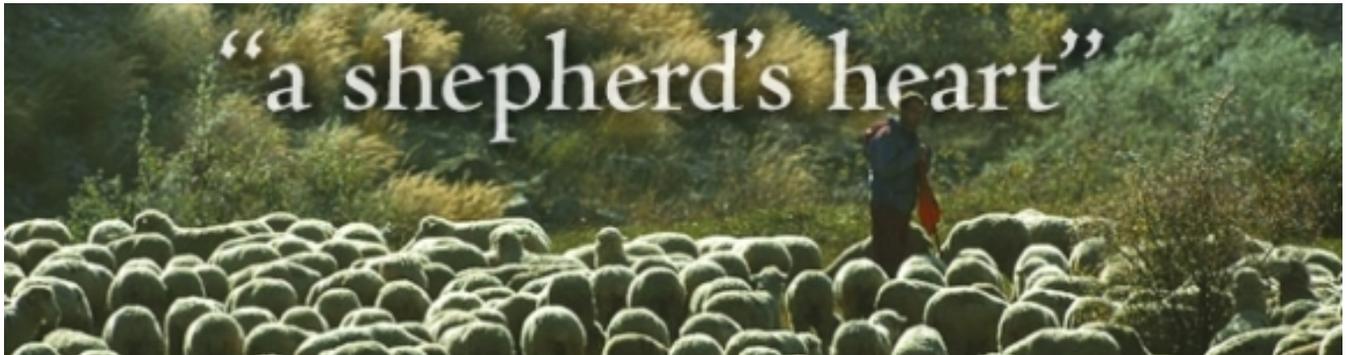
Born-Again, Justified, and Sanctified; this is the Great and Marvelous Work that God The Father planned, Jesus The Son has provided, and The Holy Spirit delivered and revealed to us His Children. What a Mighty God we serve!

Keep Looking To Jesus!!!

“a shepherd’s heart”



## Great Commission Coalition



### **The Gospel Is The Message Burning In Our Hearts**

*I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Romans 1:14-17:*

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Serving as Pastor requires a Shepherd's Heart!

The Lord spoke to Jeremiah: "...I will make my words in your mouth a fire..." (Jeremiah 5:14). Or this question: "Is not my word like fire..." (Jeremiah 23:29). In testimony, Jeremiah replied: "...his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones." (Jeremiah 20:9)

No Minister should come to the pulpit without the message of being a Servant of The Most High God burning in the heart. But wait. Is not the same true for every Spirit-filled believer? As faithful Servants of The Lord, we all bring to a lost and dying world a message of redemption through Jesus Christ that burns in our hearts.

Romans 1:14-17 is about just this - a messenger of God with a flaming heart. First, the passion of his obligation --"I am obligated"; second, the release of his unashamedness - "I am not ashamed"; and finally, the exhilaration of his revelation - "the just shall live by faith."

These are the sparks of truth that spring from the flaming heart of God's Servant. Here is the "fuel" that fed the burning heart of the Apostle Paul. And here is the motivational power by which we, too, seek to win our world for Jesus.

Recently I spoke with a young man about his preparation for full-time Ministry. We spoke of degrees, curriculum and other academic matters. However, I counseled him that above everything else, he must find passion, not just a mere human passion only, but most of all The Passion of Jesus Christ. This Passion Of The Christ that I speak of moved Jesus, The Only Begotten Son of God to lay down His Own Life for His Sheep and you and I must do the same!

The Eastern Tennessee farm house that was home for me during my growing-up years used wood / coal-burning stoves for heat and cooking. Well do I remember my Daddy opening the door, stoking the coals, and watching as the flames began to leap from the hot bed of coals. Spiritually speaking, this must remain a priority of our lives. This burning desire leaping from the hot bed of coals placed in our hearts by The Living God to see His Perfect Will in the lives of His Children as we Minister Jesus, The Love Of God, and The Power Of The Holy Spirit to His Sheep must be stirred up in each of us.

## THE PASSION OF OBLIGATION

"I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome." (Rom 1:14,15)

Other translations use the word "debtor" instead of "obligated." Perhaps the word "debtor" has the force that needs to be retained here. Paul sees himself as in debt to Greeks, non-Greeks, the wise and the foolish. It is an all-inclusive obligation.

We are in debt to everyone about us. The neighbor next door. The partner at work. Both casual and close friends and family. And all those even in other lands.

"Sir, I have come to pay you what I owe. As your debtor, it is time for me to pay up. What I owe you is the message of Jesus Christ's Redeeming Love." This would be an accurate application of these words, though a bit shocking.

These modern times have many characteristics, but one stands out in bold letters - moderns do not want to feel obligated. They will walk past a crime scene, leave the site of an accident, ignore a neighbor in need, and slam the door on a request for personal involvement.

Sadly, the church is little different. "Will you make a time and money commitment to world missions?" Answer: "Sorry, I just don't want to obligate myself." "Would you commit to a one-year teaching assignment in the Sunday School.?" Answer: "No, I just don't feel I can obligate myself for so long a period of time,." "Would you be willing to take an active part in the prayer ministry of the church?" Answer: "It is the obligation that I shy away from." And so it goes.

With the Apostle, there is no shying away from obligation. "I am obligated!" And note the dimensions of his obligation - everyone, everywhere and at any time.

I cannot help but think of Jesus in this regard. He became for us a debtor. "...he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows..." (Isaiah 53:4) "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree..." (I Peter 2:24) "...who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own..." (Titus 2:14) The passion of obligation!

Paul speaks further about this obligation: "I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (I Cor 9:16) Or as a part of this text: "That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are at Rome." (Rom 1:15) Here again is that passion of obligation. The heart of the Apostle was aflame, and that flame was fed by the passion he felt to fulfill his obligation. What commendation is due this great man of God! Can you say with Paul, "I am obligated...I am a debtor...I have an account to settle"? If not, the challenge is clear and the opportunity compelling. May we, too, have hearts aflame with a passion generated by obligation.

One of the negative aspects of "age-related maturity" is the feeling that the days of obligation are over: "I've served my time...let someone younger do it. I don't want to be obligated anymore...please don't try to tie me down." Instead, a church's seniors represent an incredible resource for ministry and service. A Spirit-filled believer never outlives obligation. It is a companion to his life until the last days are spent.

Recently a Missionary spoke of a challenge he extended at an altar of Prayer. Many people asked him how to become more fruitful as Christians. He gave each of them this counsel: "Be here at this church every time the doors are open." Each seemed to respond appropriately. Because of an unexpected change in his schedule, he returned for the evening Prayer meeting. Not a person who had asked his counsel was in that service. Again, many will not obligate themselves to a higher call of service and a deeper walk with God.

## THE RELEASE OF UNASHAMEDNESS

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." (Rom 1:16)

Can you imagine the contempt of the Greeks toward The Gospel? They would have argued that the "message of the cross was foolishness." (I Cor 1:18) , that Paul had lost his rational focus and his ideas were both shameful and embarrassing.

The Jews would have concluded the same, that Paul's "gospel" was in violation of the ideals of Judaism, and as such a shameful perversion of the testimony of Moses.

Today is no different. The world considers committed Christians to be narrow, prejudiced, bigoted and clearly anti-intellectual. It brings them pleasure to heap upon The Church as much discredit and shame as possible.

Every true follower of Jesus Christ has met the scorn and rebuke of this world. All have faced the shame and ridicule that comes with rejection. Satan loves it this way. His devices always find a focus in accusation and shame.

It is against this background that the challenge of Paul must again be heard. "I am not ashamed." The angel of the Lord comes again, as he did for Joshua the high priest when he stood accused by Satan, and declares: "Take off his filthy clothes...See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you." (Zech 3:4) It is a sharp rebuke focusing on the shame imposed on the high priest by Satan.

Paul is enraptured here with the reason for his shamelessness: "...because it (the gospel) is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..." How can anyone be ashamed, apologetic or timid about such incredible news as this?

Paul celebrates The Power Of God, its offer of Salvation, and its singular requirement of faith. There is no demand for a book, a doctrine, a set of rules, a price to be paid - just the offer of a wonderful gift to be received by faith alone.

A few days ago a beautiful bouquet of flowers was delivered to our door. All I had to do was sign my name as recipient. Salvation is like this: The Flower Of Freedom, of Pardon, of Joy, of Purity, of Peace, of Hope. The Greatest Gift ever given. Paid for. A Bouquet of a Brand New Life, a Fresh Start, a Clean Page and a New Chapter.

Paul knew it well. He was a Blasphemer. Murderer. Persecutor. But God gave Paul a Bouquet Of Flowers on the Damascus road. He "signed his name": "[Lord, what will you have me to do?](#)"

Little wonder that the Apostle speaks now unashamedly about The Transforming Power Of Jesus Christ. He has experienced the release of unashamedness. It was fuel to his burning heart.

## THE EXHILARATION OF REVELATION

["For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith..'"](#)

Here is the theology, the revelation, that brought to the Apostle the exhilaration and joy of his heart.

Martin Luther states it well: "The human righteousness of works Aristotle clearly describes...according to his views, righteousness follows man's works, and is brought about by them; God's judgment, however, is different, for according to it, righteousness (justification) precedes works and good works grow out of it."

It is the sequence that is significant. Man's religious systems begin with good works and move to "righteousness." God's Way is to begin with Righteousness and move to good works. Here is the distinguishing Cornerstone of Authentic Christianity.

I cannot fathom the Purity and Holiness of God. Jesus said: "[Be perfect, therefore, as your Father is perfect.](#)" (Mt 5:48) This command strikes absolute terror. How do I stand a chance? What do I do? Where do I turn?

It is just here that The Gospel speaks. It tells me that I can receive a Righteousness from heaven --- God's Own Righteousness, through a single exercise of faith, which will establish The Perfection demanded by God. What a glorious truth! What liberation! What exhilaration! By faith Jesus grants to me His Own Righteousness. That will stand --- even in the presence of God!!!

Is your heart aflame with this glorious message? If not, consider The Passion of Jesus Christ, the passion of obligation, the release of unashamedness and the exhilaration of revelation. Here is fuel enough to set your heart ablaze.

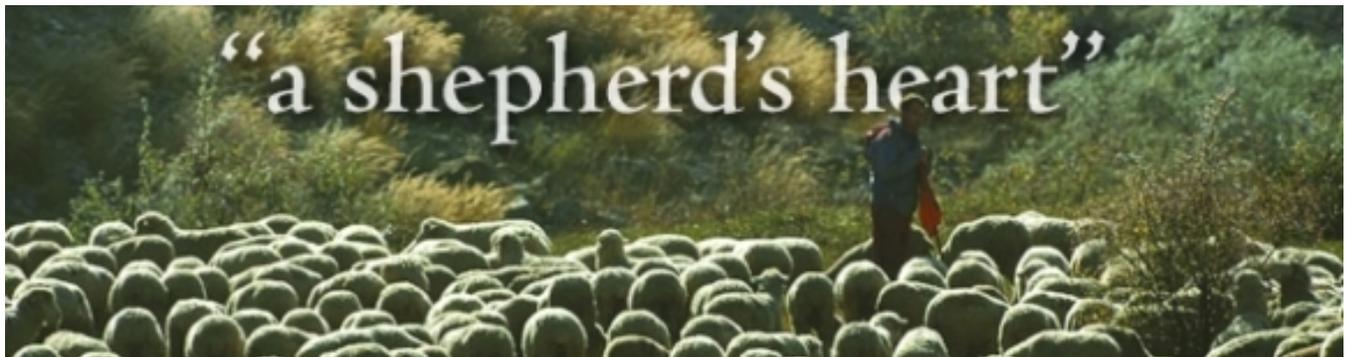
Pastors, Missionaries, Ministers of The Gospel, this is The Message Burning In Your Hearts, this is A Shepherds Heart. May The Lord Most High keep you and Bless you as you Minister to His Dear Ones.

Keep Looking To Jesus,

Dennis Robinson



## *Great Commission Coalition*



### **The Good News That We Preach Is The Best News Ever**

*Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God - the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.*

*To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:*

*Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.*

*I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong - that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.*

*Romans 1:1-13.*

Have you ever mistakenly opened a letter addressed to a stranger? If so, you have found its contents to be basically meaningless. Why? Because you lack essential background and proper context.

Properly, in this message from Paul's letter to the Romans, it is right that we pause to consider the historical setting in which this epistle was placed.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge commends Romans as "...the most profound book in existence." Bible scholar Godet says of this epistle that it is "...the cathedral of the Christian faith." Martin Luther, whose devotion to this book is well-documented, puts his commendation in these words: "This epistle is the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest gospel...It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes."

Many years ago I Preached a series of messages from the book of Romans. Looking back on that time, I believe that it was my study of God's Word in the book of Romans that enabled me to Preach this series that laid the foundation for the years of Ministry that have followed. Both the tone and direction from that time until now have been deeply rooted in the theology of Grace that so clearly emerges from this treasure chest of Divine Truth in the book of Romans.

The year is 57 AD. The Apostle Paul is in the city of Corinth on his third Missionary journey. Desirous of visiting the Believers in Rome, he dictates this letter to Tertius, his amanuensis. Using a debate type of literary form, the great Apostle develops a theology of Grace, Righteousness, Faith and Salvation.

The city of Rome at this time in history would rightly have been considered the greatest city in the world. With over one million inhabitants, it made its rightful boast as the city of learning, architecture, science, arts and religion.

However, the empty religions that were so intertwined in Roman life left an emptiness that made The Gospel most appealing. In 64 AD the historian Tacitus speaks of the Christians in Rome as "an immense multitude."

While some of the original Believers in the Roman church had likely been a part of the great scattering that followed Pentecost, most would have been converts through the Missionary efforts of Paul in Asia, Macedonia, and Greece. Most would have been Gentiles, while some would have been Jews.

The theme of the book is set forth in boldness and clarity: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jews, then for the Gentiles. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written; 'The righteous will live by faith.'" (Rom 1:16,17)

In summary, the book falls into thirds: Chapters 1-8 speak of God's Plan of Salvation; Chapters 9-11 show how both Jews and Gentiles fit into that plan; and finally, Chapters 12-16 develop the ways in which the Righteous Life should be expressed in daily life.

Viewed yet in another way, it might be said that the theology of Romans establishes these cardinal truths:

1. That God seeks after men, not men after God
2. That the Righteousness that counts with God is the Righteousness of Christ, not the good works of men.
3. That right standing with God is predicated on what He has done in Christ, not the efforts of men to find favor with God
4. That faith alone opens the gates of heaven, not the commendable works of men
5. That satisfying God's Justice is the work of Jesus alone, and not in any way the efforts of men

And finally,

6. That Salvation is totally God's doing, and not man's.

Yet, mysteriously and almost contradictorily, response remains the choice and prerogative of men. Man's part in Salvation is logically negligible, but Biblically and practically God has chosen to offer man the option of choice.

At this point we see that Salvation is totally God's doing and at the same time Salvation remains for all of mankind a choice. Good theology at this point does not appeal to logic so much as to faith and obedience. Again, in some mysterious and even illogical way God has reserved for man the freedom of choice, even though He is Sovereign Lord and Sole Provider Of Salvation.

With some brief background in place, we proceed to consider the early verses of this book under the theme: "The Best News Ever."

There is something most disquieting about the ring of the phone at 3:15 a.m. "What has happened now? Who is ill? Has there been a terrible accident?" The deep slumber of the night is shattered by the persistent ring of the phone. The fear of the moment is centered on the good possibility of bad news.

Or consider the prolonged wait in the visitor's lounge of a surgical unit. "Why is the surgery taking so long? Has the surgeon found cancer? Has something gone terribly wrong?" Again, there is the fear of bad news.

Consider also the barrage of news that reaches us via radio, television, newspaper, or the Internet. Another plane crash. A terrorist attack. A stock market plunge. An outbreak of war. Bad news!

But today, from this text, The News is Gloriously and Wonderfully Good! What is it? That Jesus has sought us, bought us and made us His Own. That Jesus has rescued us, redeemed us, restored us and ushered us faultless into The Presence of The Father. That Jesus has Loved us, accepted us, chosen us and given us passport to heaven. That Christ has cancelled our debt, destroyed the tempter's power, set us free by His Grace and called us now not only Friends but Brothers. That Jesus has taken our rags, our shame, our pain, our hurts, and our brokenness and given to us His Robe Of Righteousness and The Position Of Kings and Priests. That is good news! That is The Best News Ever!

## THE PROCLAIMER OF THE GOOD NEWS

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God - the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures..." (Rom 1:1,2)

Paul's credentials are these:

A Servant of Jesus Christ, and as such, called to be an Apostle and set apart for The Gospel.

Is it not our Lord's good pleasure to bestow upon His Children today the very same credentials? Are not you His Followers also servants of Jesus Christ? And as such, is it not for every Believer to be sent out (Apostle) and to be set apart for The Gospel? I think so. What a joy and privilege. There is no higher vocation and service known to men.

## THE PERSON OF THE GOOD NEWS

"...regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendent of David, and who through the spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord."(Rom 1:3,4)

Who is at the heart of this good news? Who is the singular player in this unfolding drama? Who steps out into the limelight? Jesus Christ.

Paul describes further that as to His human nature He stands as a descendent of David, but as to His spiritual nature, He is declared the Son of God by His Resurrection.

There is no other message, no other song, no other love, no other name, and no other passion. This Good News is about Jesus Christ - and He alone is enough.

## THE PARTNERSHIP OF THE GOOD NEWS

You and I have a "partnership with God in the spreading of The Good News". As Ministers of His Gospel we do not have Ministries of our own, we have joined with Him in His Ministry!

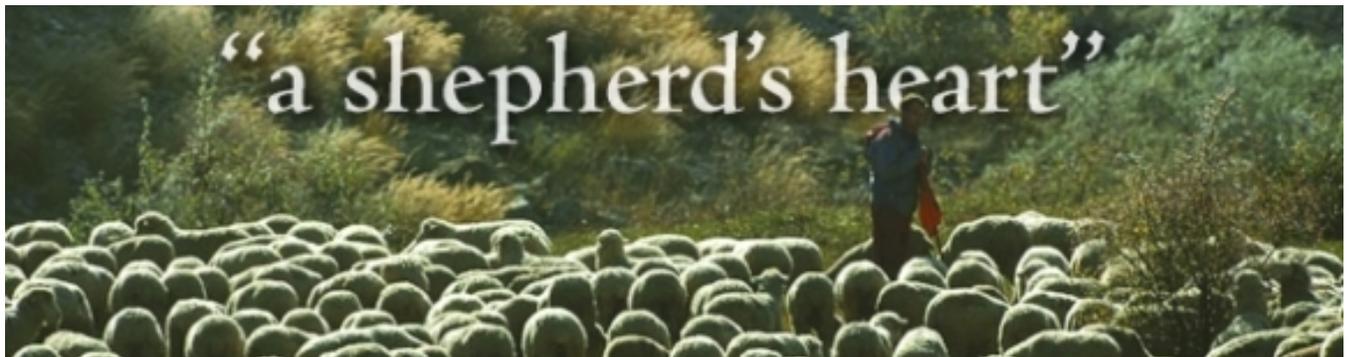
"I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish...I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." (Rom 1:14,16)

What expressive, universal, all-encompassing parameters. No barriers of gender, ethnic definition, vocation, intelligence, age or education. The stretch of God's Saving Grace is to "everyone who believes." Yes, Salvation is completely The Work of Jesus Christ, yet the prerogative of choice remains mine.

Friend, whoever you are, lay before Jesus our Grace-Bestowing Savior your unresolved guilt, your emotions of rejection and anger, your intellectual and psychological doubts, your bent toward un-forgiveness and resistance, and anything else that frustrates The Grace Of God, and join with God's People from every age in a glorious celebration of the favor with God that is ours in Jesus. Pastor, Christian Leader, Minister of The Gospel, this is your Life and this is your Message!

Keep Looking To Jesus,  
Dennis Robinson

## Great Commission Coalition



### **The Mark Of Authentic Worship**

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2*

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It is time for a more comprehensive understanding of Worship. And for that we turn to the Apostle Paul.

There are three adjectives that describe Authentic Worship in the mind of the great Apostle: Embracing. Transformational. Evidential.

This subject is incredibly significant. Across America and around the world there is a surging revival of Worship. Growing churches are typically known, at least in part, for their dynamic Worship. I believe the church must be ready for a more comprehensive, enlarged, more all-encompassing understanding of Worship. It is such an exploration that is at the heart of this message.

## **EMBRACING**

### ***AUTHENTIC WORSHIP GATHERS UP THE TOTALITY OF ONE'S LIFE AND PRESENTS IT TO GOD***

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship."  
Romans 12:1

Follow the flow of thought. Authentic Worship is the placing of our bodies on the altar as a sacrifice to God.

But what is meant by "bodies"? Simply this. It means the totality of one's life. The offering of all that we are, and all that we do, as an act of Worship unto God.

The Prayer then emerges: "Oh, Lord, I offer my body (total life) to you as an act of Authentic Worship.

There are two Biblical understandings of Worship - traditional and embracing. Let's look at each.

Traditional Worship, in the sense of worship as commonly understood, is liturgical and ritualistic. It is what the church, and the Hebrews before, gathers to do at prescribed times and places. It is formal, that is definable and predictable. "Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song." (Ps 95:1,2)

What is better than this - the people of God assembled together in song and praise unto the Lord. Hymns. Gospel songs. Anthems. Scripture choruses and contemporary songs. It is a time of life-giving inspiration. At its best, it is reminiscent of the worship of heaven:

"In the center, around the throng, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back...Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.' Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.'" (Rev 4:6-11)

Eternity will be none too long for such a glorious enterprise.

Secondly, embracing Worship, as described in Romans 12:1, is the entire, comprehensive and all-inclusive. Paul gathers up the totality of life and presents it to God as a great offering of Spiritual Worship.

Think of it. Daily work. The commute. Every thought. All employment. Every imagination. Study. Relationships. Recreation. Embracing Worship. Worship that is inclusive of all of life's experiences.

It includes Sunday, but also Monday through Saturday. It includes song, raised hands, and blended voices, but also weeding the garden and changing the oil in the car. It includes all times of corporate celebration in praise, adoration and testimony, but it also includes sickness, heartbreak, routine and accounts due.

Paul admonishes us to gather it all together and offer it to the Lord as an acceptable sacrifice, which is pleasing in His sight. This is Authentic Worship. All-embracing. Comprehensive. Daily. All-inclusive.

Many Worshipers miss this. They pass into Worship and out of Worship. They describe some of life's activities as spiritual and others as unspiritual. Some as Worship and most as Non-Worship.

How insulting to God! It is in His Heart that True Worshipers should gather together all of life and present it back to Him as a Sacred and Spiritual Act of Worship. Why do God's people insist on a division of living into unrelated parts? Is Tuesday's toil at a menial task less an act of Worship than the corporate celebration of God's Presence on the Lord's day? I think not. If, indeed, both are offered up to the Lord as an Act Of Worship. This is Authentic Worship.

**TRANSFORMATIONAL**  
***AUTHENTIC WORSHIP RESISTS THE RELENTLESS PULL OF THE WORLD AND PRESENTS TO GOD A TRANSFORMED LIFE***

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12:2a

Observe the colorful and action-packed words used by Paul in the verse. *SUSCHEMATIZO*, "to press into a mold."

How is it that the tires of your car hug the road even in wet weather? Because a tread has formed by a mold. The hot and liquid rubber has worked itself into the design of the mold and formed the tread.

Most manufactured items have been produced by a similar process. A die has been made and the parts formed from that mold. Kitchens have scores of items that suggest this process.

Paul's meaning is clear: "Do not allow yourself to be poured into the mold of this world. If you do, you will bear the indelible imprint of the design of the world. You will reflect its ways, customs, practices, habits, values and ideology.

How utterly tragic! The world, as a system and ideology, rejects absolutes. This ideology insists that there is no objectively defined understanding of right and wrong. It insists there are no realities, except those that are verifiable and measurable. It also believes that there is no higher purpose in life than to experience pleasure and delight.

Authentic Worship is transformational. It refuses to enter into a conforming pattern that is of the world. Or, put differently, Paul is calling every Authentic Worshipper to a life of purity and holiness. Worship that flows out of a renewed mind.

Transformational.

Jesus spoke of just this: "[Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipper will worship the Father in spirit and in truth...](#)" (Jn 4:23)

Or the Psalmist: "[Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.](#)" (Ps 24:3,4)

Here is a legitimate and well-founded concern - that moderns allow the stimulating sensations of emotional worship to hide, camouflage and obscure impurities in the heart. Worship must never be a "cover-up." In fact, Authentic Worship will expose sin and drive the Worshipper to an altar of repentance.

I recall talking with a friend who was living a double life. I asked how it was that he could Minister publicly and then go out and sin in blatant and contradictory ways. He explained to me the release he felt as he began to feel the emotions of Ministry. People's positive response helped him lay aside the contradictions of his life.

The point is clear. Authentic Worship is transformational and insists on the continual renewing of the mind. The emotions and sensations of Worship must never be allowed to serve as a cover-up for undealt-with impurity of the heart.

Never minimize the incredible pull of the world. It will draw you in like quicksand. It will carry you away from truth like a rip tide. It will draw you down like a whirlpool.

Do not be pressed into the mold of the world.

The second word is *METAMORPHO*: "To take on a different form." Paul provides his own definition in [2 Corinthians 5:17](#): "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

This is not reformation. This is transformation. Paul is not speaking about a "makeover" or a patch-up treatment. No! This is a new form, a transformation.

The third word is *ANAKAINOSIS*: "To make new as to character." And how does this take place? In what way does this renewal occur? Paul explains. It is a renewing of the mind. That is, it produces a new character and heart.

Authentic Worship resists the pull of the world and presents to God a renewed mind.

### **EVIDENTIAL**

### ***IT SATISFIES THE WILL OF GOD AND STANDS AS A WITNESS TO THE WORLD***

Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will." (12:2b)

From earliest days, I was challenged to seek to do the will of God. I can think of no higher priority. But what does it mean? How is it that we do The Will of God?

We find it right here in this text. God's will is achieved when a Believer offers to God a holy life. A life that is cleansed, undefiled, separate from the world and is lived in conformity with the Word of God. In this sense, The Will of God is not so much something we seek after, as if His Will is illusive and difficult to discover. No. God's Will is synonymous with a pure life that is offered up to God in Worship.

Finally, such an act of Worship is evidence to the world of the reality that is found in Jesus Christ. A Holy life, offered up to God in Worship, will be the envy of the world.

What then is the pointed lesson of the text? Simply this. Worship is not merely a 20-minute sensation of joy on a Sunday morning. It is a total life presented to God as an act of Spiritual Worship.

Authentic Worship is embracing, transformational and evidential. It is the gathering up of all of life and presenting it all to the Lord as a spiritual act of Worship.

Then the world will know!

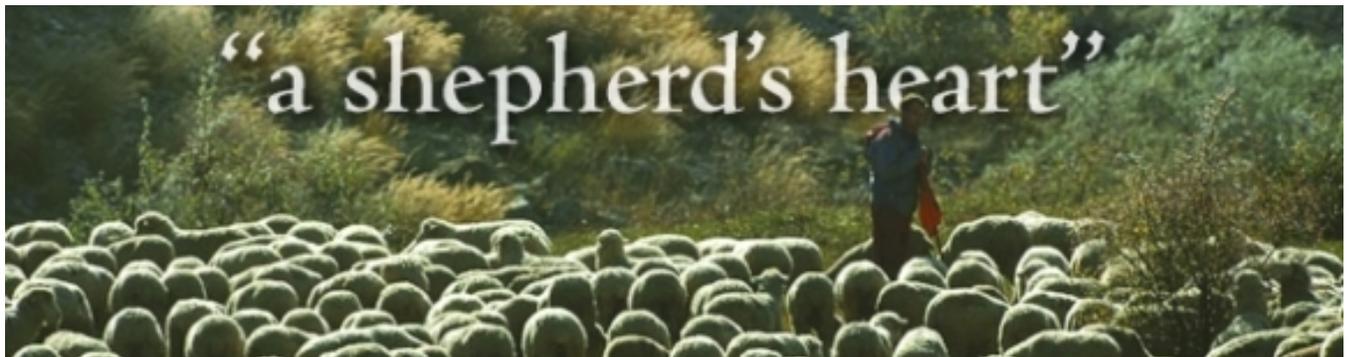
Authentic Worship is a key to God's Dear Children being able to live an overcoming, victorious Christian Life on this earth. This is the Discipleship Ministry of all Pastors, Christian Leaders, and Ministers of The Gospel. Jesus says that we are to, "make disciples".

Keep Looking To Jesus,

Dennis Robinson



## Great Commission Coalition



### **You Are Gifted to Serve**

*For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. Romans 12:3-8*

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This text has changed my life. It has helped me define my personality, warned me of places where I am vulnerable, and given me understanding of the ways in which the Ministry that I have might find fulfillment.

This text is about spiritual gifts!

For background, it is helpful to be reminded that there are at least three lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament. First, the "leadership" gifts of [Ephesians 4: Apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors/teachers](#).

Secondly, the "manifestation" gifts of I Corinthians 12: The power gifts - faith, working of miracles, and gifts of healing. The revelation gifts - word of wisdom, word of knowledge, and discerning of spirits. And finally the utterance gifts - tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy.

Thirdly, the "ministry" gifts of Romans 12: Prophecy, serving, teaching, encouragement, giving, administration, and mercy.

With this general background in mind, it is good now to move to the specific text before us.

### **ATTITUDE AND GIFTEDNESS**

"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you." Romans 12:3

Follow the flow of thought. Paul identifies the source of his authority, namely The Grace Of God. Secondly, Paul issues a warning that Christians not think of themselves more highly than they ought. And finally, Paul gives a clear directive that every Christian is to think soberly according to the faith God has given. This directive is illustrated well in Paul's words found in [Philippians 4:13](#): "I can do everything through him who gives me strength."

Attitude is critical and essential to effective Ministry. A bad attitude will sabotage every attempt at Ministry: negativism, criticism, judgmentalism, jealousy, insecurity, hostility, anger, or any such expression. Like oil placed in water, a bad attitude and an attempt at effective Ministry are mutually exclusive and it will not work.

It is virtually impossible to Minister to someone who has taken offense. That offense will become a roadblock. It will prevent the flow of positive influence into the life of someone to whom that person is attempting to Minister. While any servant of the Lord is not to please men, but God alone, it still is true that avoidable offensiveness will destroy the potential of positive and Christ-honoring influence.

Here are principles that when practiced can prevent offense.

1. Rule your spirit. A careless "speaking the mind" is never in order. An out-of-control temper will destroy every attempt at positive influence.
2. Never demean another person. An expressed respect for everyone will go a long way in opening the door to Ministry to others.
3. Be heavy on affirmation and light on correction. Typically, while the Ministry of Spirit-led correction is essential, most people are already well aware of their shortcomings and do not need to be reminded. A word of affirmation will help them to move against that area of need in their lives.
4. And finally, always take the high road. That is a metaphorical way to say that every relational decision presents the options of either expressing the best or the worst in dealing with others. There is a way that is positive and Christ-like, and there is a way that is negative and self-seeking. Always go for the "high road."

There is no point in speaking about giftedness until first the matter of attitude has been faced. This is the clear meaning of Paul's introductory comments as he prepares to speak pointedly about The Gifts of Ministry.

### **CONNECTEDNESS AND GIFTEDNESS**

"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each members belongs to all the others." Romans 12:4

What a powerful analogy! The church, The Body Of Christ, is in metaphor like our physical bodies.

1. Life depends on connectedness. A hand has no life of its own. Nor does a Christian have any life outside a connection with the Whole Body.
2. Each part is indispensable. The physical body cannot eliminate a member and still function in a complete way. Nor can the church be complete in its life and Ministry without the full participation of each member.
3. Function is based on relationship. There is an interdependency among the members of the physical body, and there is the same between the members of The Body Of Christ. Effectiveness requires an interconnectedness.

4. And finally, visibility is not a measure of value. Many of the physical body's members are invisible, yet indispensable. So with The Body Of Christ. Many members serve in ways that are largely invisible. There is no applause. Few, if any, commendations. They serve in obscurity.

Here as well, there is no point in proceeding in any discussion of giftedness without establishing the necessity of connectedness. Effective Ministry necessitates integration into The Body Of Christ.

Sadly, there are far too many attempts at Ministry "from a distance." Persons assume, wrongly of course, that church by television or Internet can substitute for the assembling together of The People of God. Such has never been the case, nor will it ever be. God's Word is clear: "[Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.](#)" (Heb 10:25)

Technology can never replace presence.

## **UNDERSTANDING AND GIFTEDNESS**

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully." (12:6-8)

These Ministry gifts are not only functional, they are intuitive. That is, they deal not only with what we do but who we are. The gifts describe the wide variety of lenses through which God's people view their world, their work, and their Ministry.

For clarity sake, let us assume that a task needs to be performed. Here are the typical questions that the representatives of each of these gifts might ask. Prophets: "What is God saying in this?" Servers: "What can I do to help?" Teachers: "What is the purpose of the task?" Encouragers: "Who could I help by encouragement?" Givers: "How much is needed?" Administrators: "Who will work my plan?" And those gifted with mercy: "Who is in need of understanding?"

Typically, though this is a broad generalization, The Prophets will be on their feet waiting to speak. The Servers will be busy in the kitchen. The Teachers will be at work in the classroom. The Encouragers will be busy visiting in the hallways. The Givers will be compiling a chart to measure giving levels. The Administrators will

be in committee in one of the offices. And the Mercy Givers will be Praying with people at the altar.

Most of us, if not all, have one of these gifts in predominance, with all of the others present to one degree or another.

Let me illustrate. My wife Janet has the gift of Server. It is the way in which she views her world. She simply thinks in Serving terms. However, she is a gifted Teacher, loves to Give, is a great Encourager, and in one way or another expresses all of the other Ministry Gifts as well.

In this sense, the gift my wife has been given becomes a personality profile. It is central to her personality. It is who she is under God. Her world is viewed in terms of Serving - be it the care of our home, the way she teaches, the care she gives to finance - it all traces back to this fundamental giftedness.

Here are the benefits of an understanding of the Ministry Gifts:

1. It helps you to understand yourself. It is good for me to remember that I will tend to look at every situation in life through the lens of Evangelist. It is helpful to understand who I am in this respect.
2. It helps you to understand others. My relationship with my wife, The Server, is strengthened as I seek to encourage her gift and discover ways in which my gift might blend with hers.
3. It helps you to understand where you should serve. Recruitment and placement in the work of the church is best governed by attitude and spiritual giftedness.
4. And finally, it helps to understand conflict. There was a church that once experienced a rather major conflict. The basic problem had to do with a failure to understand giftedness. Two leadership groups had emerged, one comprised of teachers and one comprised of servers. Had each properly regarded the other, the problem would have been averted.

These are essential disciplines that must be in place if The Ministry Gifts are to be properly understood and expressed. Prophets can become overbearing and insensitive. Servers can feel overworked and become filled with self-pity. Teachers can become unbearably over-analytical. Administrators can be strong-willed and inflexible. And those given to mercy can hide from making the hard decisions. Each gift requires the strongest kind of Discipline. An absence of discipline will result in abuse and a failure to promote authentic growth.

Let this be your commitment: "I am determined before God to use my God-given gifts to their fullest possible advantage to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ."

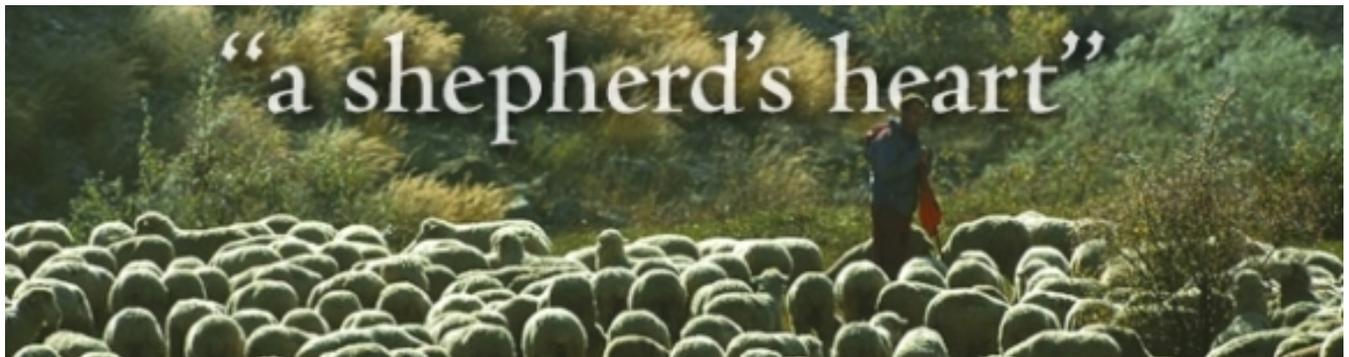
This is a lofty and most worthy goal.

Minister of God this is your Calling!

Keep Looking To Jesus,

Dennis Robinson

## Great Commission Coalition



### **Twelve Rules for Everyday Living**

*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

*Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:9-21*

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The integrity of any game is compromised by the violation of its rules - be it basketball, football, checkers or Monopoly.

Listen in to this: "You're not playing by the rules." "Okay...check the rules." "Let's not start until we decide on the rules." "Break the rules - you're out of the game." It's the conversation of the playing field and the game room. Rules matter!

Life is no different. The integrity is compromised by any disregard for the rules. The proof is everywhere. It is why our prisons are full, marriages are failing, lives are being ruined - people do not play the game of life by the rules.

This Teaching outlines a dozen rules for everyday living. They are pointed, practical, realistic, and life giving. These are God's rules. That matters most.

## **DON'T PUT LOVE ON A PERCENTAGE BASIS**

Love must be sincere." Romans 12:9a

Love is not a 50 / 50, "you love me, then I love you," back and forth, cause and effect, rotational kind of human enterprise. No! Sincere love is not conditioned by response nor is dependent upon it. Instead, it is a 100 percent commitment. Unilateral. Selfless.

Sincere love is best exemplified by The Redemptive Work Of Jesus. This act of Love was independent of any human response. In fact, it was achieved while all men were still in their sins. It is this quality of Love that Paul desires to be characteristic of The Love that unites together The People Of God.

## **DON'T CONFUSE HATING AND LOVING**

"Hate what is evil; cling to what is good." Romans 12:9b

Strange. Deplorable. Sad. Tragic. Natural man hates good and loves evil, the exact opposite of what is in The Heart Of God for him.

"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." (Jn 3:19)

Here then is the universal confusion. Whereas man ought to love good and hate evil, He has instead just positioned the one over the other. The reality is incredibly tragic. It is this inversion that lies at the heart of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict, the many wars in Africa and beyond, the violence on the streets across America, the slaughter of millions of unborn children, and the collapse of the family. People love what they should hate, and they hate what they should love.

It is right that man should see The Infinite Beauty Of Holiness and the infinite damnability of sin. Sadly, for many the exact opposite is true. Men hate Righteousness and love iniquity. It is this sad inversion that imperials the souls of the masses.

May our Prayer be this: "Lord, give me a passionate and uncompromising hatred of evil and a passionate and uncompromising Love for good. Allow for me no confusion in what is loved and what is hated."

## **HOLD THE DOOR FOR OTHERS**

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves." Romans 12:10

Here is something that is offensive and discourteous - that a man should thoughtlessly walk through the door ahead of a woman. It is a careless act that seems in violation of appropriate politeness.

There is an even greater offense. It is when the people of God fail to honor one another in Brotherly Love. Paul insists that such should never be the case. Instead, let us "hold the door" and in honor prefer others over ourselves.

The story is told of a devoted Saint and a brilliant scholar who walked into a crowded hall to the applause of a great crowd. Unconsciously, the man stepped aside and joined the applause for the man entering the hall behind him, confident that the other man, not he himself, was worthy of such acclaim.

Let that be the spirit of mutual devotion and honor that characterizes The People of God.

## **FAN THE FLAME OF GODLY PASSION**

"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord." Romans 12:11

Here is one of the greatest challenges a Christian faces - to keep the zeal and fervor strong. Instead, the tendency is for both to fade and wane with the passing of time. Paul's word here is strong and most needed.

It is an inspiration to observe the fervor and zeal of new converts. They serve the Lord and share their faith with an enviable passion. Nothing else should be expected for the more mature and well-seasoned Follower Of Jesus.

Remember The Words Of Jesus to the church at Ephesus? "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love." Rev 2 : 4 Or His Words to the church at Laodicea: "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm-neither hot or cold-I am about to spit you out of my mouth." Rev 3:15,16

Fan the flame of Godly Passion. Stir up the spirit of zeal within you. Allow no influence that will diminish your fervor.

Perhaps no condition in the modern church is a greater peril than the diminishing of fervor and zeal. So many have slipped into a state of complacency and indifference. Gone is the Godly Passion that once so characterized the church in revival days. It is for a resurgence of this Passion that the church must Pray.

### **EMBRACE THE GREAT IMPERATIVES**

"Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." Romans 12:13

This is offered as a helpful definition: "Christianity is the religion of the open hand, the open heart, and the open door." The Call Of Jesus is first to follow Him and then to serve. The church is as "Community" Of Faith. Care and support are a mandate. Hospitality is non-optional.

### **DON'T BE TIGHT-FISTED**

"Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." Romans 12:13

It also must be understood: "Christianity is the religion of the open hand, the open heart, and the open door." And that definition includes hospitality and caring.

The Call Of Jesus is first a call to come follow Him. Then it is a call to serve. And the church is one of the places where that service is to find expression. Why? Because the church is "The Community Of Faith," and where there is meaningful Community, there must be The Ministry of caring.

It is a mandate!

### **BLESS EVEN WHEN CURSING SEEMS EASIER**

"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse." Romans 12:14

This is most challenging. Think of that person who has hurt you the most. Now, Paul says you are to bless that very person. Hard? Yes. Optional? No. Required? Yes.

Jesus put it this way: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven." Mt 5:43-45

An argument lifts its ugly head: "But by blessing I invalidate the consequences for that person's indiscretions." No. As we will see later, that is God's work. And He will be faithful. Your help is not needed.

This Ministry Of Blessing others is much needed in The Body Of Christ. Many feel "unblessed" and crave just that - which only you can give.

### **RIDE WITH OTHERS THROUGH THEIR HIGHS AND LOWS**

"Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn." Romans 12:15

Which is the greater challenge, to rejoice with those who rejoice or to mourn with those who mourn?

Typically the greater challenge is with the first. It is difficult to enter into the joy of someone whose experience we are tempted to envy. "Why am I not Blessed in that way?" "Why was I bypassed when the raises were given?" "Why did I not receive a healing --- that we were both Praying for?" It is hard to enter into the joy of another's Blessing when we ourselves are in desperate need and painful hurt.

However, difficult as it may be, there is a release that comes when once we enter the joy that is ours when partnering with others in their successes and Blessings. Here is as mark of spiritual maturity!

Similarly, there is a joy in entering into the sorrows of those who mourn. A partnership in God's Grace at just this time is a mutual source of Blessing and strength.

### **GIVE UP THE CRAVINGS FOR STATUS**

"Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited." Romans 12:16

The carnal part of man craves a relationship with people of power and influence. We like to be named among them.

Remember, there is only one person with whom your status matters, and that is Jesus Christ. To bear His Name and to be His Follower is the only status that any of us need or should desire.

## **NEVER HIT BACK**

"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone." Romans 12:17

Have you heard this kind of conversation: "Johnny, why did you hit Tommy?" Answer: "Because he hit me first." This is a commentary on the unregenerate side of man.

Listen to Jesus: "If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles."

Mt 5:39-41

To embrace this truth is to achieve a place of respect and influence. Instead of it being a position of weakness, it becomes a position of strength. Instead of being stripped of authority, a much greater authority is recognized. It is this quality of character that results in powerful leadership in The Body Of Christ.

Here is the key to the resolution of the world's great conflicts: Someone who is willing to not "hit back." That response opens the door to peace. It is the key to the resolution of every relational conflict - someone willing to not "hit back."

## **GET ALONG WITH OTHERS**

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Romans 12:18

All of us know of persons who seem to get along well with just about everyone. And we also know of others who seem to demonstrate strife no matter the setting.

Getting along well with others is non-optional. It is a Biblical mandate. Every Follower Of Jesus must accept this requirement.

## **LET GOD EVEN THE SCORE**

"Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath. For it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord." Romans 12:19

Only God can handle the paybacks. That is His Work and His alone. Our partnership with Him in this enterprise will be totally nonproductive and destructive.

Have you been wronged? Is judgment due? Is there a way to be righted? If so, leave that to God. He will do what needs to be done, and He will do it in a just and thorough way. No one will evade The Judgments Of God. His Wrath will find the very offense that is so troubling to you. And the payment will be just.

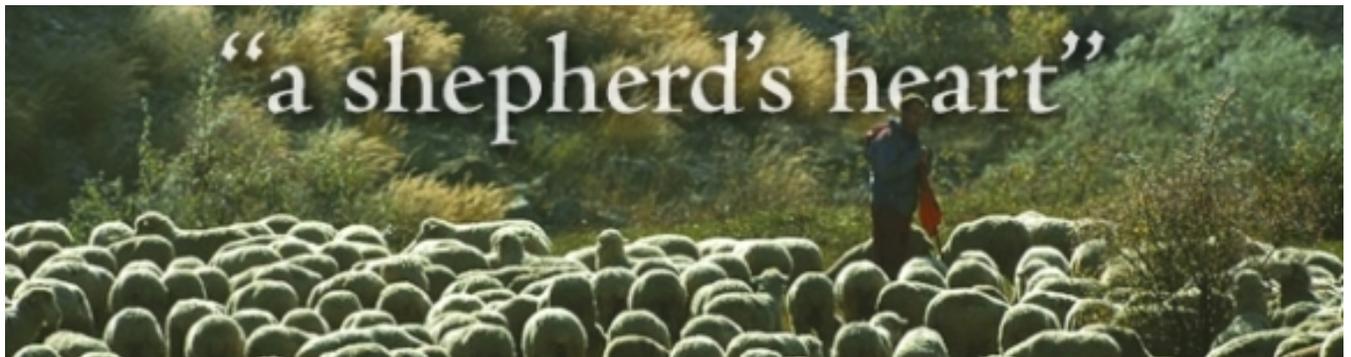
Here then are the twelve rules of God for everyday living. Keep them well in place, and life will be both good and incredibly fruitful.

Pastor, Christian Leader, Minister of The Gospel walk in this manner and Teach God's Dear Children to do likewise!

Keep Looking To Jesus,

Dennis Robinson

## Great Commission Coalition



### **Do I Have A Heart for the World?**

*I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another. I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

*Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done-19) by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. Rather, as it is written: "Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand." This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you. Romans 15:14-16:27:*

*For additional text see, [Romans 16:1-27](#)*

Once a Preacher commented while visiting a small village church and observing the traditional way in which it operated: "It was a village church with a village God." In other words, there was no vision for The Greatness Of God revealed in a global context.

The Scriptures speak often of a heart for the world. "Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession." Ps 2:8 "Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples." Ps 96:3 "...the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the seas." Is 11:9 "My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun." Mal 1:11 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Mt 24:14 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Mt 28:19

"Do I have a heart for the world?" That is the question that presses in upon all who are sincere Followers Of Christ. "Am I burdened for the eternal destiny of all peoples, tribes, languages and nations?"

May we break out of our traditions of men and isolationism and become "world -focused" Followers Of Jesus Christ!!!

Just a word of background to the text before us; Paul is wintering in Corinth in 57-58 A.D., at the conclusion of his third Missionary journey. He is in the eve of a trip to Jerusalem to deliver in person the offering of the fledgling churches that had responded to the need to care for the poor in Jerusalem. The epistle to the Romans was then delivered to Phoebe who was about to embark on a trip to Rome.

In these verses that follow, the Apostle demonstrates the ways in which his heart for the world had found its anchor.

### **IT IS ANCHORED IN A MESSAGE**

Paul begins with a heartfelt word of commendation: "...you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another." Romans 15:14 Then follows his strong words on the message he represented.

"...I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me...by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not know, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation." Romans 15:17-20

Paul's heart for the world found an anchor in The Gospel that he Preached. Driven by this reality, he declared: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" I Cor 9:16

How might this Good News (EUANGELION - "Gospel") be expressed?

1. That someone Loves me. And that person is Jesus.
2. That someone will erase my past. And that person is Jesus.
3. That someone will heal my brokenness. And that person is Jesus.
4. That someone will give me a reason to live. And that person is Jesus.
5. That someone will take me to heaven. And that person is Jesus

The world has news - lots of it. But it is typically bad. Wars continue. Crime is rampant. And world tensions refuse to ease. This is the relentless pattern and flow of worldly news.

Here is a glance at a front page of a city newspaper. Here are four of the five headlines:

- Convicted Killer Receives New Trial.
- Boy Disappears in Park
- Local Priest Ousted-After Child Molestation Claim
- Death Penalty Sought Against Convicted Murderer

Thank God for Good News, The Good News Of The Gospel. In this Teaching it is my Prayer is that you will find motivation and encouragement along with every sincere Follower Of Jesus Christ to become a Christian with a heart for the world.

### **IT IS ANCHORED TO VISION**

Paul is planning to head from Corinth to Jerusalem. From there it was his plan to stop at Rome on his way to Spain. This plan never materialized. Instead, Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, imprisoned for two years in Caesarea, and from there he was sent to Rome. Indeed he did visit Rome, but not as he had planned.

"...since I have been longing for many years to see you, I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to visit you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while."

Romans 15:23-24

Paul was clearly motivated by vision. He had his eye on Spain which at that time marked the end of the world.

It was this anticipation that motivated Paul to endure all of the hardships that accompanied his travels: "...been in prison...flogged...exposed to death...beaten with rods...stoned...shipwrecked...a night and a day in the open sea...in danger from rivers...bandits...without sleep...hungry...thirsty..." 2 Cor 11:23-27

Still, despite it all, Paul is motivated by vision to head for Spain. "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." (Prov 29:18)

Spirit – Filled Followers Of Jesus are by promise visionaries: "And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days." Joel 2:28,29

We are living in the days of visions and dreams.  
What does vision provide?

1. It will focus your faith.
2. It will pinpoint your Prayers.
3. It will consolidate your efforts.
4. It will energize your emotions.
5. It will measure your achievements.
6. It will magnify your Praise.

God's People need a vision that includes the coming of God's Kingdom. "Thy kingdom come." They need as well a vision for the local church, their families, and themselves. It is vision that draws God's People from one level of Ministry and service to the next.

It is well to quit looking back and instead look forward. God's Plan for the future is wonderful indeed. "For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" Jer 29:11

## IT IS ANCHORED IN RELATIONSHIP

Paul had many friends in the church in Rome. Likely the nucleus of the church had been formed by those who were witnesses to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on The Day Of Pentecost. Over the next 28 years, many others would have migrated to Rome from many places across the Empire.

Here is a listing of some of his friends named in [Romans 16](#);

1. Priscilla and Aquila: Fellow workers who had risked their lives for Paul
2. Epenetus: The first convert to Christ in the province of Asia
3. May: Identified as a "hard worker"
4. Andronicus and Junias: Considered by Paul to be "outstanding among the apostles"
5. Ampliatus: One whom Paul loved in the Lord
6. Urbanus: A fellow worker
7. Apelles: A brother tested and approved by Christ
8. Herodion: Identified as a "relative"
9. Tryphena and Tryphosa: Considered by Paul to be hard-working women
10. Persis: One who worked very hard in the Lord
11. Rufus: One chosen in the Lord
12. Rufus' mother: Calling her his "mother"

It is abundantly clear. Paul's global influence was nurtured by strong relationships. Here is a reminder that global Evangelization is a cooperative and Covenant matter. It is teamwork that gets the job done.

Then comes a warning from Paul: "...watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naïve people." Romans 16:17,18

Following is a fantastic promise: "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet." Romans 16:20a

Paul does not fail to send greetings also from the people in Corinth: Timothy. Tertius - who had served Paul as scribe. Gaius - the one whom Paul commends: "whose hospitality I and the whole church here enjoy." And Erastus - the city director of public works.

This is a most inspiring benediction: "Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but not revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him-to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. (16:25-27)

These final verses of the book of Romans are understood to be the most biographical, warm, tender and personable of all Paul's writings. His heart is laid bare. And further, his heart for the world is laid bare. These are wonderful verses of insight into the spirit and personality of the great Apostle.

Three questions in conclusion:

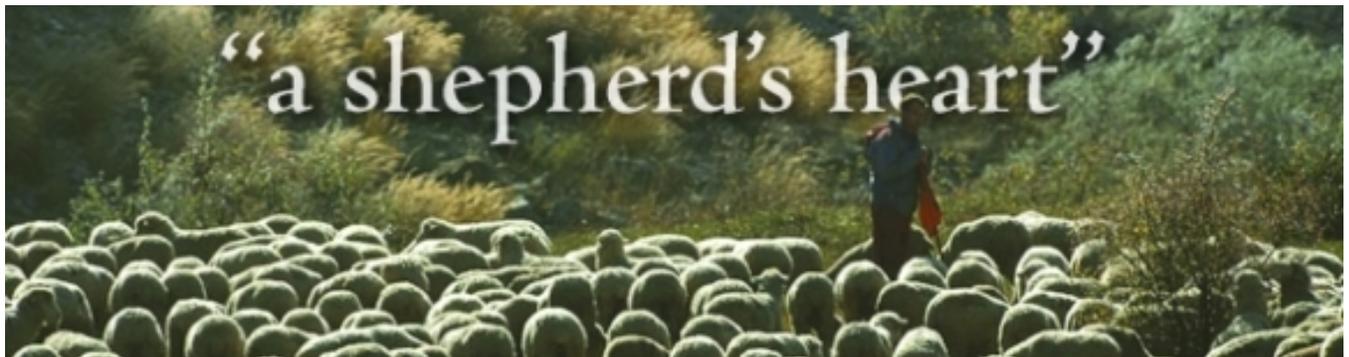
1. Does The Gospel Message burn in your heart like a fire?
2. Do you have God's Vision for your life?
3. Are you rich in fellowship as you do his work to reach the world?

Be a Follower of Jesus Christ that has a heart for this lost and dying world!

Keep Looking To Jesus,

Dennis Robinson

## Great Commission Coalition



### **Slaves to Christ**

*What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey - whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.*

*I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:15-23*

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God made us for relationship - with Himself and with others. Why? Because relationship is at the core of God's being.

Before time began, there was relationship within the Trinity. When God created man, it was for relationship. Abraham was called out of Ur to be the father of many nations in order to establish a people of God. Jesus came in order that

man might be reconciled back to God. On The Day Of Pentecost, the church was born - the EKKLESIA, "a called-out" people. The picture of heaven as described by John the Revelator is a place of relationship --- a great multitude, angels, elders, living creatures. Relationship is at The Heart Of God.

Romans 6 is a description of the one relationship that matters most. The relationship that unites every true Believer to Jesus Christ. Walk with me on a journey through this inspiring chapter.

## THE QUESTION RAISED THE SECOND TIME

"Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?" Romans 6:15

Perhaps a question in response to a question would be helpful. Why are Believers prone to sin more freely under Grace? (Of course, the question is flawed as we will see.)

First, because human nature likes to be free from restrictions. The Law says: "Thou shalt not." But Grace says: "I am accepted in the beloved." Human nature reacts more kindly to words of assurance than words of prohibition. It prefers Grace to Law.

Secondly, because human nature likes to be free from requirements. The Law says: "Thou shalt." But Grace says: "Not by works of righteousness...but by his grace..." Human nature prefers gifts to work.

Thirdly, human nature likes to be free from consequences. The Law says: "In the day you sin you will die." Grace says: "Neither do I condemn you." Human nature does not welcome the consequences of neglect and wrongdoing. Free pardon is much preferred.

But human nature has a distorted view. It tends to presume on God's Grace. It misses the grandeur and majesty of what God intends by the extension of Grace in men's lives. Sadly, many Believers have this flawed and mistaken idea of The Grace of God. An explanation is in order.

Here is a simplistic description of The God of Law: Demanding. Harsh. Austere. Aloof. Judgmental. In contrast is the God of Grace: Accepting. Loving. Approachable. Personal. Forgiving.

An illustration will clarify the point. My daddy had all of the attributes of law (as noted above), but he expressed them out of a heart of grace. So it is with God. The attributes of law are expressed out of a Heart Of Grace.

In this sense, The New Covenant completes The Picture Of God. It shows how The God of Law has expressed those attributes out of a Heart Of Grace. In this way, Jesus Christ becomes the fulfillment and completion of The Law.

So...knowing this, how can we continue in sin? Back to the above illustration. It was my daddy's heart, not his rules, that drove me to obedience. In the same way, it is not so much The Laws Of God but The Grace Of God that drives me to obedience.

Put differently. It is The Love Of God that more forcefully compels obedience than the judgments of God. Rightly Paul asks: "[Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?](#)" It is rhetorical with a resounding "No!" How can rules ever surpass affection as a force to promote obedience?

For this reason, the message of Grace, when properly understood, becomes the motivational power in any pursuit for Holiness and separation from the world. It is The Love Of Jesus Christ that prompts obedience and calls the heart to purity. Never is The Message Of Grace, when properly understood, an encouragement for loose and careless living. It is just the opposite. Grace has a Call to Holiness that the Law can never match. Why? Because its motivation is Love, a Love exhibited in all of its glory at Calvary.

Here is a most significant truth as it relates to parenting. I obeyed my father, not so much because I feared his wrath, but because I did not want to violate his love. It was his heart, not his rules, that called me to obedience.

A child who sees obedience in this way will be a parent's delight. That child sees obedience as an honoring of parental love, not just the keeping of parental rules. It all follows from the Biblical picture of the right understanding of Law and Grace.

It is just this that the religions of the world do not grasp. Typically, they promote an obedience based on Law, not Love. There is no heart. No Grace. No favor. No acceptance. No assurance. Law-based obedience only brings death. Love-based obedience, centered in Jesus Christ, brings life.

You can never overemphasize God's Grace. "Oh," some might say, "he only preaches grace. He's soft on sin. There is not enough judgment." Of course, the Law must be Preached for the benefit of the lost sinner in order to display and magnify their lost condition apart from God. But it must be a Law that flows out of Grace. For as people get a glimpse into The Loving Heart Of God, they will flee every evil and cling then to every requirement of the Law. Grace sets us free from the Law so that we can then embrace it again. Once The Heart Of God has been expressed in Love, His demands are not then grievous but joyful.

Obedience flows freely and willingly out of an encounter with The Loving Heart Of God.

## **ANOTHER ANALOGY TO STRENGTHEN THE TRUTH**

"Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey - whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?"

Romans 6:16

Earlier in the chapter Paul uses baptism as an analogy to show that continuing in sin is not possible for the Believer - for he has died with Jesus. Now Paul shifts the analogy to slavery. You cannot continue in sin because you are now a slave to Jesus. This second example is as powerful as the first.

Why? Because a true slave has no identity, reason for being, purpose in life, affection or loyalty, other than that which flows from his union with his master. His is a total absorption into his master.

Socially, Paul's choice of an example seems inappropriate. Perhaps that is why he says: "I speak in human terms." However, theologically it is both powerful in impact and true in meaning. The True Follower Of Jesus Christ is a slave to his Master. And in that relationship the Believer finds meaning and completeness.

Paul describes two kinds of slaves: First, the slave to sin. Here is a soul ruled by lust, a spirit under the influence of Satan, a strong predominance of self-focused attention, a life sold out to Satan, a person whose delight is in doing evil, and a destiny that speaks only of death.

On the other hand the slave to obedience. Here is a display of humility, a spirit of joyful service to the Lord, a single-minded affection, and a heart that reaches out for more and more of The Master's presence. The reality here is Righteousness.

I think of Biblical examples; Cain in contrast to Abel, Saul in contrast to David, Ahab in contrast to Elijah, and Herod in contrast to John the Baptist. The contrast is clear and the outcome certain: Slaves to sin result in death, Slaves to Jesus Christ result in Righteousness.

## **A POWERFUL TESTIMONY TO ILLUSTRATE THE POINT**

"But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

I put this in human terms because you are weak in your natural selves. Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness. When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness." Romans 6:17-20

What a testimony! These people had been products of the decadent Roman society. They had a past laden with the trappings of every conceivable indulgence into iniquity. But now through Jesus they were liberated with a new loyalty. They were enslaved to Jesus Christ and The Way of obedience that resulted in Righteousness.

Whose slave are you? That is the question of greatest urgency. Let it be Jesus!

### **A CLEAR CHALLENGE THAT ALL MUST FACE**

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23

Count on it. The paychecks that Satan issues are cashed with the currency of death. Drugs, sexual promiscuity, alcohol, greed, discord, pride, jealousy, revenge - they all are "rewarded" with a payment of death and eternal damnation.

How many times, to my great sorrow, I have watched people do the work of Satan and then receive the payment of death for their "work." Satan is a hard taskmaster. He serves up death each and every time as the compensation due all those who serve him.

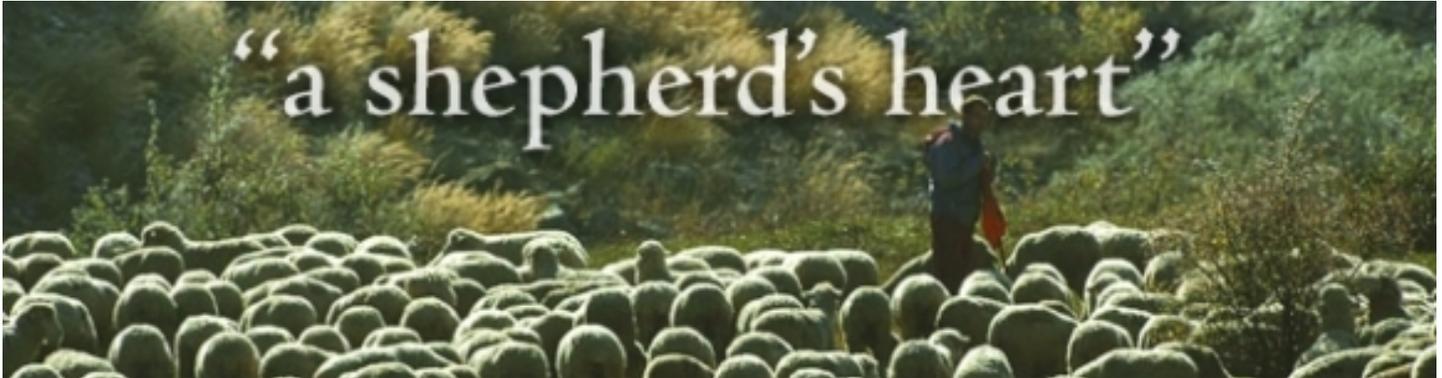
The choice is clear: Slavery to Satan brings death and eternal damnation in Hell. Slavery to Christ brings Eternal Life and Peace with The Lord God in Heaven. Which will it be for you? Which will it be for those that you Teach and Minister to?

Keep Looking To Jesus,

Dennis Robinson



**Great Commission Coalition**  
Good News Always



### The Father's Heart

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; My cup overflows. Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Psalm 23*

A Dear Friend once shared this account; "On a trip to Israel I witnessed one of the most incredible things that I had ever seen. I will never forget it. The evening sun was setting and two shepherds approached a nearby well with their flocks. For approximately 20 minutes, the two men talked to each other while their sheep mingled and roamed about. The animals wandered everywhere. Soon, you could not tell one group from the other because they were so intertwined and scattered throughout the countryside.

But then something extraordinary happened. One of the shepherds turned around, quietly called out a command, and started walking away. Instantly those two flocks separated. The sheep recognized their master's voice, and as he made his way up the hillside, they streamed in from every direction to follow him. They knew exactly what to do".

This my Brothers and Sisters is precisely The Relationship that our Lord Jesus says that we have with Him, Jesus says; ***"I am the Good Shepherd; and I know and recognize My own, and My own know and recognize Me . . . The sheep that are My own hear and are listening to My voice; and I know them, and they follow Me"***. (John 10:14, 27) If we have received Jesus as our Lord and Savior, then we should have Faith In Him, and simply do as He says.

It is awesome to have The Sovereign Lord of all creation Guide, Protect, and Provide in a personal way. I spend time with Him in Prayer and I have discovered that He knows exactly what I need. King David of Israel also knew this as he wrote; ***"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want"*** (Psalms 23: 1)

The Father Perfectly Provides (Psalms 23:2) The Lord God not only provides for my physical needs, but also for my emotional and spiritual needs. Absolutely nothing can satisfy my soul as The Lord does. He completes my desire for Love, acceptance, companionship, and intimacy like no one is able to do. And The Lord will not lead me to places that will harm me. ***"Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks will receive. Everyone who searches will find. And the door will be opened for everyone who knocks. Would any of you give your hungry child a stone, if the child asked for some bread? Would you give your child a snake if the child asked for a fish? As bad as you are, you still know how to give good gifts to your children. But your heavenly Father is even more ready to give good things to people who ask"***. (Matthew 7:7-11)

The Father hates sin and He has Provided for the Restoring and Sanctifying of my soul (Psalms 23:3) He hates sin because it created emptiness, guilt, anger, and loneliness in my heart and separated me from Him. So He has healed me of all transgressions through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ His Holy Son. Then He gave me The Holy Spirit to live in me, so that He may Teach me to walk in a manner Worthy of His Child. (Acts 2:38) says, ***"And Peter answered them, Repent (change your views and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it) and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of and release from your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"***.

The Father leads me through deep valleys of adversity and on to mountaintops of Victory (Psalms 23:4-5) God's Promise is that no matter what the trial may be, in spite of conflicts, and whatever the heartaches may be, I am Promised that no matter how hopeless my circumstance may appear to be, that my God will Lead me through them all. Even in these places of adversity The Lord does what only He Can Do --- He transforms these troubles into good, positive things in my life. Each obstacle that I encounter actually builds my character and draws me closer to My Lord than before.

The Father has an awesome destination for me. It is one that is far beyond all of my greatest expectations and hopes. (Psalms 23:5-6) I do not know the specifics of what this year holds for me, but my Daddy does. He understands The Path now far better than I will even after I have walked it. He has actually gone before me and He has mapped out the very best route in order to get me to where I need to be. ***"I will bless you with a future filled with hope--a future of success, not of suffering. You will turn back to me and ask for help, and I will answer your prayers. You will worship me with all your heart, and I will be with you and accept your worship".*** (Jeremiah 29:11-13)

I do recognize The Shepherd's Voice. When my Master speaks to me it is my heart to always immediately obey! Anytime that I fail to experience God's Best it is due to me not actively listening for His Voice. There is a challenge that exists to me closely following The Good Shepherd; the devil, the world, and the flesh. But as The Word says; ***"Greater Is He that is in you than he that is in the world". Jesus says; "the devil comes to kill, steal, and destroy, but I have come so that you may have life and that more abundantly".*** So that clearly marked the devil's demise. Then in reference to the world The Lord states; ***"be of good cheer, I have overcome the world".*** Finally pertaining to the flesh; ***"For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"*** (Galatians 2:19-21)

My confession regarding you and I is in keeping with The Father's Heart; May our cup overflow, may His Goodness and Mercy Bless us and those that we Minister to, as we seek to serve Him all the days of our life. Servant Of The Most High God, You Are Destined To Reign With The Lord Jesus Christ!

Keep Looking To Jesus,

Dennis Robinson